BRINGING THE GODS TO MIND

MANTRA AND RITUAL IN EARLY INDIAN SACRIFICE

LAURIE L. PATTON

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Miriam Karp, A Bard Visiting the Sacrifice, after an
image from the Sri Venkateshwara Temple in Tirupathi.
Courtesy of the artist.

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For Shalom
who finds poems,
and in memory of Laura
who lived and died with them.

Contents

Acknowledgments

This book has its beginnings in the long sunny hours I spent reading *Ṛg Vidhāna* and *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* with H. G. Ranade at Deccan College in 1992, and *Śabara* with Venugopalam on his porch on the hill. That year, while I read many other texts not included in this book, I was afforded the opportunity to begin to think systematically about issues of the experience of poetry in ritual. My first visit to Nanded, India, in 1992 allowed me to engage in conversation with Smt. Selukar. I was able to continue those discussions with G. U. Thite in 1999. To Professors Ranade and Thite, I owe a great debt of guidance, critique, and inspiration. A subsequent visit to the sacrificial performances conducted by Nānā Kaḷe in Barshi was also inspirational: I discovered in that small pocket that the Śaunakīya school was alive and well. Ultimately, it would take me ten years to think through all the issues presented in these pages.

In those ten years, I was writing and thinking about many other things, but the problems of mantra and poetry and sacrifice were never far from my mind. Long conversations with Maitreyee Deshpande, Sucetas Paranjape, Madhavi Kolhatkar, Saroja Bhate, and Gayatri Chatterjee sustained my determination to finish my research into those subjects. I owe an intellectual debt at a distance to Charles Malamoud and Ariel Glucklich, whose intuitions have matched mine, and whose creative insights have acted as the intellectual shoulders on which I have tried to stand.

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Abbreviations

PRIMARY SOURCES

AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
ĀGS	*Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*
ĀpDS	*Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra*
ĀpGS	*Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra*
ĀpŚS	*Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*
ĀŚS	*Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*
AV	*Atharva Veda*
AVPar	*Atharva Veda Pariśiṣṭa*
BĀU	*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*
BD	*Bṛhaddevatā*
BDS	*Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra*
BGS	*Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*
BŚS	*Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*
CU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
GDS	*Gautama Dharma Sūtra*
GB	*Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*
GGS	*Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra*

HGS	*Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhya Sūtra*
JB	*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*
JGS	*Jaiminīya Gṛhya Sūtra*
JS	*Jaimini Sūtra*
KA	*Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra*
KāṭhGS	*Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra*
KB	*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*
KBU	*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*
KhGS	*Khādira Gṛhya Sūtra*
KS	*Kāthaka Saṃhitā*
KŚS	*Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*
Manu	*Manusmṛti*
MBh	*Mahābhārata*
MGS	*Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇīsaṃhitā*
MŚS	*Manava Śrauta Sūtra*
PārGS	*Pāraskara Gṛhyra Sūtra*
PB	*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*
PGS	*Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra*
RV	*Ṛg Veda*
RVidh	*Ṛg Vidhāna*
SV	*Sāma Vidhāna*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
ŚBM	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Mādhyaṃdina*
ŚGS	*Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*
ŚŚS	*Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*
TĀ	*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
TU	*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*
VaiGS	*Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra*
VDS	*Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra*

VGS	*Vārāha Gṛhya Sūtra*
ViSmṛ	*Viṣṇu Smṛti*
Yāj Smṛ	*Yājñavalkya Smṛti*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*
YV	*Yajur Veda*

SECONDARY SOURCES

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona*
AIOC	*All-India Oriental Conference (Proceedings)*
ALB	*Adyar Library Bulletin*
AO	*Acta Orientalia*
BDCRI	*Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*
BI	Bibliotheca Indica
CASS	Center for the Association of Sanskrit Studies
EVP	*Etudes Vediques et Panineenes*
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal*
JA	*Journale Asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JOIB	*Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London*
JUB	*Journal of the University of Bombay*
SBE	*Sacred Books of the East*
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Wien
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellshaft, Leipzig
ZMR	*Zeitschrift für Missionwissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*

Introduction

THE ISSUES

It is early morning in a small village in western Maharashtra, India. The *pravargya* rite is being performed — an introductory Vedic ritual with an obscure and intriguing history. During the ceremony the doors of the sacrificial arena are closed. Everyone knows that the sacrificer's wife is present, but she is hidden from view. The chanting of Ṛg Vedic hymns makes this rite all the more mysterious. But it is not the sound alone that makes the atmosphere so intriguing. The hymn being chanted is *Ṛg Veda* 10.177 — the *māyābheda* hymn — which helps to discern illusion. Does the placement of this hymn about discerning illusion in this secretive rite matter?

I argue in these pages that the placement of the hymn indeed matters. In the Vedic period, ritual was the location in which both imaginative and social realities were brought to mind and played out in the public arena. Through the medium of esoteric poetic utterance, chanted by hereditary classes of performers, Vedic society assembled its collective life. Much of Indological scholarship, grounded as it has been in the distinction between imagination and empirical experience, has tended to view aspects of Vedic culture as "solemn prayer" and other, usually later, aspects as "magical spell." This book will attempt to rethink this aspect of Vedic reality by questioning the distinction between magic and religion, focusing instead on the use of Ṛg Vedic mantras in particular ritual

schools. The use of Ṛg Vedic mantras in ritual has a name and a method behind it: *viniyoga.* This is the application of mantras in particular ritual situations, and it is undertaken according to particular hermeneutic principles based on metonymy, or associative thought. This book is about the recovery of that hermeneutic principle of *viniyoga.*

In order to understand the full trajectory of Vedic realities, one must understand the trajectory of Vedic influence, conservation, and extension through a lineage of textual traditions and communities who practice them. This lineage begins with the Ṛg Vedic hymns, the mantras themselves, and continues in their application in the public ritual activity of the Śrauta rites, the domestic sphere of the Gṛhya rites, and the more broadly practical sphere of the Vidhāna texts. Through this lineage of texts, each in its own way serving as a commentary on what went before, one can trace the formation and extension of the early Indian religious imagination as a complex ritual and poetic process that extends across the generations.

In the spirit of such a hypothesis, this book is a history of one strand of interpretative imagination in ancient India, a study in mental creativity and hermeneutic sophistication. While acknowledging the value of certain trends that interpret Vedic tradition more predominantly in terms of its formal structures, I want to make the claim that, even in the act of participating in a Vedic ritual, the imagination of the participants is highly engaged. In this I take the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* the *Nirukta,* the *Bṛhaddevatā,* the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* and other texts at face value when they call for "bringing the deity to mind."

Such a focus is also borne out by fieldwork on contemporary Vedic sacrifice. I recently made a trip to Barsi, Maharashtra, to study a Soma *sattra,* or year-long sacrifice involving pressing and consuming Soma, the sacred drink that gives eloquence. As I spoke with the sacrificer, Nana Maharaj Kale, I learned that he had begun a small *gurukula,* or school, for those interested in training to sacrifice and had tried as much as possible to base it on the ancient system of education, with some important innovations. Unlike other sacrificers I have met, this man adhered to the Śaunakīya school of interpretation of Vedic mantra (about which I have also written), and he cited its texts often.[1]

This school tends to emphasize the mental imagery of the mantras and the use of them as powerful aids to the efficacy of the sacrifice. The innovations in his *gurukula* reflected this commitment to using mental imagery, including helping students to memorize Ṛg Vedic hymns and to

imagine the deities within them, through the use of photographs. It was a startling experience to watch the students chant Vedic hymns while meditating on photographs of Sūrya or Sarasvatī. It was clear, however, that the idea of imagining the deities was crucial to the sacrificer's view of contemporary sacrifice, and he had found a textual tradition to support his claim.

In my first book, *Myth as Argument,* I take one of those Śaunakīya texts, the *Bṛhaddevatā,* and show the ways in which its narratives show particular attitudes toward poetic creation. Its myths portray the circumstances in which the mantras were composed and the situations that inspired the *ṛṣi*s (Vedic sages) to speak. I argue that the mantras featured in the text did a particular kind of work, and their meaning and imagery lent itself a great deal of interpretive richness. These narratives about poetic creation changed over time, thus showing the changing attitudes toward the Vedic *ṛṣi* and the Vedic canon.

I now turn from the power of the mantra within myth to its power within ritual. Although it is certain that meaning was only one part of the larger understanding of the power of mantra in ancient India, it cannot be ignored. In focusing on the role of imagination in ritual, I place the history of the ritual usage of Vedic mantras in a new light. I attempt to rethink some of the old ways of explaining the move from Vedic to "classical" brahmanical perspectives, such as the move from public, solemn rites to less solemn ones, and from legitimate religion to a degenerate "magical" enterprise. In this sense, *Bringing the Gods to Mind* is a book with general implications, although it proceeds in a very textually specific way.

Most importantly, in my analysis of *viniyoga,* I argue that the Vedic imagination has powerful associative, metonymic properties, linking mantric image to ritual action. By these linkages, the interpretive schools *(śākhā*s*)* of the *Ṛg Veda* suggest possible associative worlds that might be utilized in the performance of sacrifice. It employs very specific categories — such as fire, the role of enemies, a wrong path taken in the woods — with which to interpret afresh the mantras of the *Ṛg Veda* in new ritual situations. To this end, after setting the theoretical framework, the book proceeds with several very common Vedic categories (eating, enemies, eloquence, journeys, the attainment of another world) and traces the interpretation of a single Vedic mantra, or set of mantras, throughout the various Ṛg Vedic ritual schools, or branches, of the Vedic period — the *Āśvalāyana Sūtra* and the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,

the Gṛhya Sūtras, and the *Ṛg Vidhāna*. In performing this history of interpretation, I intend to show what happens to a single set of images contained in the mantra, as it finds itself in new ritual and intellectual environments.

It is important to be very clear here: for purposes of brevity and reader interest, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive study of every single *viniyoga* in the Ṛg Vedic corpus. That would look more like an encyclopedia than a book. Rather, I have chosen both representative themes and representative hymns to give an overall sketch of what kinds of patterns of *viniyoga*s might be present in Vedic history. The themes selected for this study seem to me the most interesting and the most suggestive.[2] However, there are many more Vedic themes than the ones I have chosen, and it is my hope that others will take them up. The small studies in this book are by no means exhaustive; rather they are meant to be signposts for further study.

It is also important to note that my focus is fairly exclusively on the Śrauta and Gṛhya literature — the practical uses of the poetic fragments of hymns within the procedure of the ritual itself. For the purposes of readability and controlled focus, I do not engage the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads in the same detail. It is essential to point out, however, that both these genres are crucial forms of mantra interpretation — almost "theories" of mantra interpretation in their own right.[3] In the Brāhmaṇas, we see an etiology, or theory of origins, emerging, and in the Upaniṣads, we see the philosophical connections between individual mantras and cosmic processes. It is my hope that this book can serve as a kind of prolegomenon to more extensive studies that include both of these other genres in a more thorough way than I have done here.

Furthermore, my interpretive stance is "retrospective," in that it is organized in part by the end point of the Vedic period, the Vidhāna material. In other words, I ask: How did these mantras find themselves as relevant to this particular theme (such as eating, journeys, and so on); what imaginative shifts occurred in the ritual interpretation of mantric allusions such that they became particularly relevant to the theme? In addition, what do these various mantras share in common, and how might such commonality contribute to our understanding of how Vedic people conceptualized, and imagined, certain activities? While some nineteenth- and twentieth-century studies, such as that of P.K.N. Pillai, addressed the semantics of mantra application in specific ritual contexts, my diachronic, thematic approach has not yet been fully utilized in the study of the semantics of mantra.[4]

THE CHAPTERS

In chapter 1, "Poetry, Ritual, and Associational Thought in Early India: The Sources," I provide an overview of the general genres of early Vedic India (Śrauta, or formal ritual texts; Gṛhya, or domestic ritual texts; and Vidhāna, or "magical" ritual texts). In addition, I recast the Ṛg Vedic traditions (Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana branches) in terms of their status as interpretive genres. In doing so, I query the idea that these texts represent solely a tendency toward "magical" usages of mantra. In addition, the lens of *śākhā,* or institutional branch of thought, focuses on the processes that the tradition itself emphasizes: that bringing the mantra to mind, the mental construction of sacrificial or general application of mantra, is an important part (though not the *only* part) of the Vedic worldview.

In chapter 2, "Poetry, Ritual, and Associational Thought in Early India: The Theories," I use recent works on the theory of metonymy, showing how metonymy might be viewed as a specific kind of intellectual practice that provides cognitive linkages between ritual image and ritual act. I begin by focusing more specifically on the question of the mental image, bringing recent studies on the nature of religious imagery to bear on the mental operations that are involved in each new interpretive setting for each performed mantra. Performance theory, especially the work of Dennis Tedlock and Charles Briggs, helps to show the basic value of what it means to imagine something within a ritual situation, and how the relationship between the mental image and the ritual act is constituted.[5] More specifically, I begin to develop a theory of metonymy, or association, to understand the use of Ṛg Vedic imagery in ritual. Here, the recent works of Klaus-Uwe Panther and Günther Radden help provide the framework.[6] I show the basic properties of metonymy, such as its highly contextualized nature, its pragmatic or goal-oriented perspective, its referential capacities, and its use of prototypes and identification. Unlike some cognitive theorists, however, my intention is not to generate rules that might predict religious behavior. Rather, I assume that the mental image forms behavior and action, in addition to being formed by it.

In chapter 3, "*Viniyoga:* The Recovery of a Hermeneutic Principle," I consider the metonymic thinking present in the *viniyoga,* or application process, of the poetic formulations of mantra within Vedic ritual. I explore some of the usages of the term and related ideas in the Vedic texts and argue specifically for including the semantics of mantra in contemporary Vedic interpretation. Theories of metonymy and performance combine to show the ways in which each verse of performed poetry in

Vedic India opens up a world of associative, imaginative possibilities within the ritual itself. *Viniyoga* is rich in these potentialities.

In chapter 4, "Fire, Light, and Ingesting over Time," I begin to spin the interpretive threads.[7] My interpretive stance includes both the beginning and the end of the thread—that is, the Ṛg Vedic mantras that use the poetic images of food and are named as helpful in the rituals of eating as well as in the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna texts. These include such themes as the digestion of food, the expiation of eating forbidden food, and protection against poison or diseases associated with food (*RV* 1.2–3; 1.22.17–21; 1.87.1–11; 7.1; 10.1–5; 10.30; 10.88).[8] In tracing the *viniyoga*s of each mantra through its interpretive path, certain striking themes emerge. Almost all the Ṛg Vedic mantras used in the Vidhāna material to aid the process of eating invoke Agni as protector and bestower of wealth, the banisher of disease. These same images are reinterpreted in the context of the Śrauta material: they are frequently used in the *pravargya* rites, the inaugural rites in the Soma sacrifice before the actual consumption of Soma. Thus, they act as a kind of blessing, or grace before eating. Here, the association with the actual sacrificial fire is straightforward: as Agni is kindled in the Śrauta texts, so his strength will be as protector, as conveyor of food to the gods, as cooker of food to be consumed. Yet interestingly, none of these public images of fire are used in the Gṛhya, or more household rites. We skip almost immediately to their use in the Vidhāna material, the work of the individual reciting brahmin. In the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* the mantras about fire are used to aid digestion, counteracting the effects of bad food. The public power of fire is harnessed for internal digestion in the individual body. Thus, we might narrate an interpretive history of eating as follows: the power of fire to protect and give wealth is harnessed as the inaugurator of the process of public eating, of commensality in the Śrauta material. That very commensality—the public nature of fire and eating—is then appropriated fully by the late Vedic brahmin, who, as a kind public figure personifying the powers of sacrifice, must use fire as a kind of inaugurator of the digestive processes in his own body. The images of fire move from ignition to fuel: the image that is, in the Śrauta context, a spark that ignites the various actors and processes of sacrifice later becomes an "accessory" that fortifies and protects the single consuming body. Chapter 4 is not simply returning to the usual interpretation of the "internalization of the sacrifice," but to something more subtle: it is the reinterpretation of the image of fire itself, from the centrifugal movement of the fire that ignites the cosmos to the more centripetal movement of digestive protection for the virtuoso.

In chapter 5, "The Vedic 'Other': Spoilers of Success," I address the conception of the enemy and its history in particular mantric usages (*RV* 1.32; 1.50; 1.83–84; 6.73; 6.2.11). In Ṛg Vedic imagery, verses about the enemy are directed at particular foes who might have been defeated once, but who need to be defeated repeatedly (the *ārya/dāsa* tribes, those who would plunder the sacrifice). In this sense, the Ṛg Vedic "other" acts as a kind of prototype who should be constantly vanquished. In the Śrauta literature, however, these same verses are used in rituals that are exceptions to regular sacrificial performances. The mantras act as prophylactic against a moment of ritual vulnerability, in the exceptions of "extra-recitals" in the *abhiplava* ceremony or the insertion of these verses in the *śyena* and *ajira* sacrifices. In the Gṛhya material, the same mantras describe some aspect of brahminical victory and vulnerability. One recites them just before one stops the mantric recitation at the pinnacle of Vedic study. One also recites them as one is stopping one's new chariot at the moment of entry into the assembly hall. The more successful the sacrificer is, the more likely he is to invoke protection against potential enemies. In the Vidhāna material, we see mantra recitation that transforms any potentially harmful agent or situation (enemies, illness, and so on) as it comments on it. The change in interpretive strategy from earlier texts to the *Ṛg Vidhāna* is one of generalization from sacrificial situations to ones that include any and all possible circumstances in which the verses might be relevant.

This history of the image of the enemy, then, shows that the more one takes risk (modifying the Śrauta ceremony, building a new chariot as a Gṛhya householder, moving about in the dangerous world beyond the sacrificial arena as the Vidhāna implies), the more one is likely to have enemies. Again, this moves beyond the usual interpretation of ritualized enemies along the *ārya/dāsa* axis and argues instead that the Vedic "other" is not a monolithic idea, but always relative, conceptualized in relationship to particular moments of vulnerability.

In chapter 6, "A History of the Quest for Mental Power," I examine the history of images used for the attainment of mental and verbal ability (*RV* 1.18.6; 8.100.10–11; 8.101.11–16; 10.21.1; 10.71; 10.125). In the Śrauta literature, these mantras tend to be used in the invitational verses just before an offering, usually an animal offering. In the Gṛhya literature, they are used before the arrival of a guest (and therefore before a meal), or when the Vedic student is returning home and encounters strange sounds. In the Vidhāna literature, however, they are recited to secure a more general form of verbal eloquence, mental agility, peace, as

well as averting any and all consequences in case one has uttered a falsehood. Thus, the progress of thought is as follows: in the Śrauta literature, eloquence is most needed in anticipation of killing and offering flesh, but later, in the Gṛhya literature there is no act of killing involved; the guests will be fed as guests should, and the student will change his world through eloquence as he moves from one stage of life to another. In the Vidhāna literature, supernormal powers of eloquence are produced by the verses themselves — eloquence produces eloquence.

We learn, then, that the construction of eloquence in knowledge in the Vedic period begins in the context of the production of food in sacrifice, but ceases to be linked to it after the brahmin becomes more mobile and is no longer linked to mind. The eloquence and mental power that began as poetic insight, from a close relationship with the gods, moves into a form of ritual expertise, which in turn becomes an instrument to be used outside the sacrificial arena, ready at any moment to counteract the bad effects of speaking untruth.

In chapter 7, "The Poetics of Paths: Mantras of Journeys," I analyze the mantras associated with journeying through space (*RV* 1.42; 1.99; 1.189; 3.33; 3.45; 10.57). The Ṛg Vedic imagery describes the dangers of journey-taking in general and invokes particular gods who are agile at finding their way (Pūṣan is the Pathfinder, Indra sets out into the world and brings back wealth, and so on). Interestingly, these hymns frequently pray for wealth as well as safety on a journey, as the two are inextricably linked in the Vedic world. The territory of a journey, then, is generally conceived as a map of danger, but also as a guide to wealth. In the Śrauta literature, these mantras can be used as part of the "sacrificial extension" of recitals that links one day and the next in a multiday *sattra,* or session. They are also used at the beginning of the Soma sacrifice, the "morning speech" *(prātaranuvāka),* which sets the sacrificer out on the particular sacrificial journey. In both cases these mantras "carry" the sacrificer from one point in time to the next in the journey, and they are designators of sacrificial time. They provide a kind of "map" of sacrificial progress. In the Gṛhya material, the mantras are applied in the case of an individual emerging into exterior space after a long period of existing in an interior intellectual space of his teacher's house: the *samāvartana* ceremony, the ritual performed by a Vedic student who has completed his duties and who wishes to go away. And finally, in the Vidhāna material, in what should by now be a familiar pattern, these mantras are used more generally, when setting out on any dangerous journey. However, they are used in the assumption that one has already conquered space: they act as expi-

ation for going astray or committing a wrongdoing, or for when one is setting out on a business journey in the anticipation of garnering wealth. Thus, this chapter moves beyond the usual understanding of Āryans as spatial hegemons and focuses on the way in which space itself was reconceptualized: what had been a kind of designation of a geographic "map" in the Ṛg Vedic mantra becomes a kind of ritual "map" in the Śrauta material, and a personal territory over which one has more and more control in the Gṛhya and Vidhāna material.

In chapter 8, "A Short History of Heaven: From Making to Gaining the Highest Abode," I examine the interpretive history of Ṛg Vedic mantras for attaining heaven (*RV* 1.154.1–3; 9.112–15; 10.82.7; 10.129). Interestingly, all these hymns contain images of creating and making, whether it is the recapitulation of the deeds of Viśvakarman, the diverse ways in which the poet likens his activity to that of carpenters and physicians, or the creative acts of Viśvakarman and Prajāpati. In the Śrauta material, these hymns are used at moments of ritual intensification, such as those of "overrecital" in the third Soma pressing, or at the beginning of ritual moments where the deity, such as Viṣṇu, is the appropriate deity of the ritual. (The *ātithyeṣṭi,* or "guest-offering" ritual, for example, is always designated for Viṣṇu.) In the Gṛhya material, the hymns are sung at the *upakaraṇa* ceremony, which begins Vedic study.

Intriguingly, then, in the Vidhāna text, these hymns of creation and beginning are used to represent the highest attainment, that of the abode of the god who has created, or the abode of immortality. Thus, we can discern a fascinating history of heaven, one that begins by simply depicting the creation of the world by the deity, is represented in both Śrauta and Gṛhya material as the verses of beginning something, and switches in the Vidhāna material to the end of a properly lived life, the highest abode. What started as the imagery of beginning turns into the imagery of ending: the early Vedic creative acts of the gods fuel the late Vedic imagery of the afterlife.

In the conclusion, "Laughter and the Creeper Mantra," I argue that all of these Vedic themes show a particular kind of transformation as one traces their *viniyoga,* or application in ritual commentary. Each involves a "ritual disassociation," whereby images and actions are harnessed to each other in metonymic association in the earlier period and then become de-linked as the Vedic period progresses. The image of fire as spark links itself to all forms of sacrificial participants, including the body; fire as fuel links itself only to the body. The image of the enemy as foe in battle links itself to all possible sacrificial, martial, and house-

holder successes; the image of the enemy as generalized other loses the imaginative possibilities of these forms of victory and becomes a way of thinking about a more existential mode of domination. The image of the journey as geographic and ritual map links itself to both space and time within ritual procedures; the image of the journey as a possible "source of wealth" is no longer tied to particular material forms of progress. The mantras of creation are initially used as an entailment of a "first" ritual act, such as a guest-offering or a form of Vedic study; later, the images of creation serve as mysterious vehicles for gaining the next world, but no longer as mirrors of the material actualities of this life.

In tracing this kind of ritual disassociation I am not arguing in a nostalgic way about a simple loss of material imagination. Rather, I am arguing that through the lens of metonymy, we can see that the use of these poetic images changes in significant and previously undetected ways: in earlier Vedic India, mantric images are linked to other images and other actions; in later Vedic India, mantric images are resources and potentials, in their own right. Fire, in its own right, becomes potential for individual bodily prowess; journey, in its own right, becomes potential for wealth, and so on. In the Vedic case, it is not simply a matter of the loss of ritual action, the "disappearance of the sacrifice." One sees a shift from metonymic power of the image (the associative linking of one ritual element to another) to productive power of the image (the use of the single ritual image to stand in for a number of potential outcomes). To put it more simply, the power of the Vedic image is no longer to mirror the cosmos, but to promise it.

In closing, building my thoughts on the work of Catherine Bell, I suggest that this same approach can be used in other religious traditions where ritual is central. Although the examples in *Bringing the Gods to Mind* focus exclusively on the Ṛg Vedic ritual schools of early India, the analysis of metonymic thinking as an exercise in the history of religions inevitably enlarges the opportunity for comparative studies: How do other religious traditions, as they systematically reflect on their foundational texts, create imagined realities that link mind and action, interpretation and behavior, and religious apprehension with practical life? I argue that, in taking the poetic images called to mind by the ritual actor seriously, one can examine rich and unexplored dimensions of ritual performance. The category of bringing the gods to mind can bear real intellectual fruit as a form of interpretive history.

Bringing the Gods to Mind shows us that no study of ritual action in the Vedic period is complete without a concomitant study of ritual imag-

ination. I am proposing an addition to current trends in Vedic studies to interpret Vedic ritual exclusively as either taxonomical activity or syntactical activity. It is a way of making even the most dry, recipe-oriented texts, such as the *viniyoga*s in the Śrauta or Gṛhya Sūtras, come alive as a form of human interpretation with imaginative possibility.

Many scholars of Indian religions have intuited this sensibility in Indian texts. Far from being either a mechanical or a mystical sensibility, *viniyoga* is rather a way of playing with words and actions, juxtaposing and rejuxtaposing them in an infinite variety of combinations that can lead to new insights. We can see this dynamic at work even in the Vedic hymns themselves and in the suggestions made within their verses as to their own metonymic power. For example, Joel Brereton writes that the power of one of the great puzzle hymns of the *Ṛg Veda,* 10.129, is in its associative power *and* the response its mantras create in its audience. The hymn is a cosmological meditation on the origins of the universe that ends with an ambiguous, questioning tone — "He who is the overseer of this world in the highest heaven, he surely knows. Or if he does not know . . . ?" As Brereton argues, while thought is the hymn's central metaphor, "through its associations with other forms of creativity, the hymn finally embraces all kinds of birth and therefore the entire living world."[9] He goes on to posit that if, in *Ṛg Veda* 10.129, thinking is the original creative activity, then "the solution to the hymn and to the question of the origin of things rests both in what the poem says and, even more, in the response it evokes from its audience."[10] Stephanie Jamison writes in the same spirit of the "associational semantics" present in Vedic composers in their own time: "All words have a complex nexus of associations, of primary and secondary meanings, of habitual collocations available to the speakers of the language and the inhabitants of the culture it expresses."[11]

So, too, Wendy Doniger sees such juxtapositions between word and act, between mental image and external image, in the later narratives of the *Yogavasiṣṭha,* but also even earlier in the Vedic texts. In her view, early texts such as the *Atharva Veda* "force us to speculate about the relationship between our mental perception of the world and its mental perception of us."[12] David Shulman and Narāyaṇa Rao see such play between word and act in the tradition of *cāṭu* poetry of South India — poems learned by heart, which are also employed in social communication. As they put it, "A *cāṭu* is not really an isolated verse, even if it appears as such. It is an integral part of a system of communicated and shared knowledge, often with strong intertextual connections and inter-

active relationship between these apparently independent verses."[13] In this tradition, the poem is both a "fixed text" as well as a "poem of the moment," to be utilized in new and different contexts each time it is recited. Vedic mantra, despite its embeddedness in the large codified web of rules and regulations, also retains this aspect, and we can see it in the poetic patterns that emerge once we study *viniyoga*s carefully.

While being careful not to impose anachronistic interpretations, I would argue that this is also the spirit behind the ethnographic work on contemporary Vedic sacrifice suggested by Frederick M. Smith, David Knipe, Timothy Lubin, and many others. Finally, it is also the spirit in which many of the Indian scholars responded to these tentative thoughts on *viniyoga* in Pune in 1999; they excitedly suggested further work, such as building an index of *viniyoga*s as a new form of access to Vedic history. Many of them were reflective about the usages of mantra in contemporary India, as well as about the connections between Vedic Gṛhya traditions and so-called folk traditions in Maharashtra involving mantras.

PART ONE

The Theories

CHAPTER 1

Poetry, Ritual, and Associational Thought in Early India

The Sources

In India, the realm of the mental image is not on the defensive.

Wendy Doniger, *Dreams, Illusions, and Other Realities*

Every Tuesday night, a businessman in Varanasi, India, chants a chapter from the *Gītā* as part of his regular *bhajan,* or chanting group, at a Kṛṣṇa temple near the south side of the city. He says it puts him in a calmer mood. A middle-aged woman is taking care of her mother, who is dying of cancer. She chants the same verses from the *Gītā* as a form of comfort in the more uncomfortable moments her mother has to endure. A woman in Chicago, Illinois, says the Hail Mary at St. Patrick's Cathedral on her way to work every day; the recitation is for her nephew who has cerebral palsy. The priest regularly recites the same prayer on August 15, the Feast of St. Mary, in solemn liturgical procession. These instances represent the same poetic verses of prayer — the same images — used for very different purposes. One can pray the same prayer, which is to call the same gods to mind, in radically different existential and liturgical situations. Yet the mental images tend to remain constant and, once uttered, affect the world around the speaker.

The situation was similar in early India. In the northeastern part of the country in the late fourth century BCE, a student of the grammarian and indexer Śaunaka recommended the following: a brahmin should worship the rising sun with the Ṛg Vedic hymn 1.50, because it is destructive of heart disease and conducive to excellent health. Even more specifically, the last half-verse of the hymn is also destructive to enemies: a brahmin need only think of an enemy and mutter this half-verse the instant he sees

him, and within three days, the brahmin will be able to restrain the hatred between them. Brahmins composing ritual manuals before Śaunaka prescribed the same set of poetic verses, but for very different purposes. They used these verses to the sun to perform safely and harmoniously the dangerous act of making a ritual procedure longer, to drive safely a newly built chariot to the assembly hall, or to help a newly graduated Vedic student return safely to his home village.

Enemies, chariots, expanding rituals, Vedic study: What unifies these different uses of the same mantra, the same verses of poetry? What is the inspiration behind the ritual uses of poetry, like the Hail Mary or the verses from the *Gītā*? Many scholars, some writing as recently as 1987, would call these Vedic recommendations "magic." I argue that it is more historically accurate and intellectually productive to name it metonymy, or more broadly, associational thought. The lens of metonymy can afford new perspectives in the history of Vedic thought and the history of religions more generally. Moreover, the ritual power of the mental image has been neglected in the world of Vedic studies. For the last two decades, the field of performance studies has been analyzing in great detail the relationship between poem and context—when and why a certain poem is recited and how it builds and creates associational worlds. These performance theorists could be very helpful in reading manuals like the ones directing mantric utterances in ancient India and in suggesting reasons why mantras were used at certain times and why certain images might be important at certain ritual moments. This approach is important for Indology because within the Western academy the study of Indian commentarial practices has had both philosophical and textual emphases, but has not focused as much on the pragmatic or performative aspects of commentary. While other, less philosophical exegeses of the Veda, such as the recommendations cited above, have also been present within the Indian tradition, they have tended to be classified as lesser works, described under dubious terms, such as "magic." Such terminology has obscured some important developments in early Indian thought and practice.

Further, the recent emphasis in Vedic studies has been almost exclusively on the *form* of the mantric utterance—its syntax, its ability to be removed from one ritual and placed within another, and so forth. This has been an excellent and much needed corrective to the overemphasis, perhaps even romanticization, of "content"—the idea that the Vedic poets were Wordsworthian mystics, roaming the Hindu Kush and the western areas of Gujurat and the Punjab in search of the Indian equivalent of a vision of daffodils.

Yet the corrective to romanticization need not be replaced by an emphasis on formal analysis alone. In his book, *Mantra Interpretation in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* Jan Gonda treats, among many topics, the subject of "interpretation based on semantics."[1] The related chapter contains only four or five pages; whereas other lengthier chapters discuss interpretation based on similarity of sound, application in ritual, and so forth. The browser, having strayed into the Vedic section of the library, might pick this book off the shelf and come away with the idea that the meanings of mantra, and the images contained therein, were simply unimportant to the ancient Vedic philosophers who wrote the Brāhmaṇas.

In his book, *The Sense of Adharma,* Ariel Glucklich has made an excellent beginning toward a phenomenological analysis of images in Indian classical thought. Distinguishing between religious symbols and images, he argues that the phenomenology of religion cannot study only religious symbols and ideas, but needs to focus instead on the act of consciousness that brings such symbols to life. Whereas a symbol is something that by nature is expressive of an object that transcends everything in the world, a living image is not something whose sole nature is to refer, but in fact is to constitute a mode of being in the world.[2] A living image is something generated in the active consciousness of any actor and the experience that such an actor brings to his or her understanding of the image; in the Vedic case, this is true particularly for the ritual actor. Phenomenology raises images, with their structures and relations, to an equal footing with the structure of metaphysical realities.

Glucklich goes on to analyze the traditional categories of classical Indian aesthetics (*rasa, dhvani,* and the like) to elaborate on this point about the basic modality of images. In contrast, I want to remain within the earlier, Vedic period and show, through a comparison of the use of images in the practices of textual recitation of mantra, that such recitation is in fact a form of evocation that builds certain structures and relations between the images invoked in the mantra and the actions that accompany it in the outside world. Through this method, I believe one can accomplish several important things: (1) one can get a sense of how different genres of text (Śrauta Sūtra, Gṛhya Sūtra, and Vidhāna) use different sets of imagistic structures to construct their world; and (2) one can see, from a micrological point of view, the history of how the same image is used as a resource, again and again, for different social purposes. While Glucklich focuses on the use of images to construct a concept and its opposite—*dharma* and *adharma*—I want to focus on the use of images that link particular images to the social and ritual world

constructed by the text. Hence, my term: the history of associational thought in early India.

The history of religion informs a third point: we have missed an opportunity in the historical study of ritual exegesis. It is now fairly widely accepted that both scholars and theologians working from within a tradition use the term *magic* to delineate less properly "theological" forms of religious discourse. However, the critique should not stop there. The term also serves to cut off important social and exegetical continuities between a religious tradition and its so-called magical counterpart. It drives a wedge between forms of thought, which, from the tradition's eyes, may be integrally connected. Thus we are concerned not only with a question of deconstructing but of rebuilding: scholars of religion can and should develop other terms that suggest, and even restore, the linkages between textual traditions that have been sundered by the overzealous application of the term magic. With these new terms (which are, of course, themselves provisional), students of religion interested in questions of intertextuality, religious language, and ritual studies may be invited in.

MATERIALS FOR THIS STUDY: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

The Four Vedas

What are the basic building blocks of the kind of study proposed in this book? The Vedas come clearly into focus through this power of speech. *Veda* means knowledge; historically, this knowledge took the form of word and chant. Four kinds of knowledge are specified as the property of brahmin priests, the hereditary keepers of tradition: the *Ṛg Veda,* or knowledge of the verses; the *Sāma Veda,* or knowledge of the chants; the *Yajur Veda,* or knowledge of the ritual directions; and the *Atharva Veda,* or knowledge of the Atharvans, the procedures for everyday life (also called "magical" formulae). These four divisions reflect a division of labor among the priestly elite, and it meant that knowledge itself was organized around the performance of *yajña,* or sacrifice. For the Vedic Āryans, *yajña* is the central action that was meant to motivate and sustain the entire universe. The Vedas are the words and chants accompanying the actions and served to augment and vitalize the actions into having cosmic power. Without the sacrifice, the sun would not rise in the morning, nor would the cattle grow and multiply, nor would the crops flourish throughout the year. The possibility of long and healthy life for

humans, and the worship of the fathers after death, or the ancestors, would not be present.

Some Vedic commentators have observed that women and low-caste members of society would not have understood the meaning of the words of the Veda. This knowledge, aside from being a kind of fourfold division of labor of the sacrifice, was also hereditary through the male line and passed along entirely orally. The different collections of hymns in the *Ṛg Veda* are called *maṇḍala*s and are essentially "family" collections passed down from father to son, or teacher to student. Moreover, the method of keeping the knowledge oral was a highly advanced science of memorization. Later, the Vedic texts were divided into *saṃhitā pāṭha,* or the words combined in euphonic combination *(sandhi)*; the *pada pāṭha,* in which the words are separated and stand on their own; and the *krama pāṭha,* or syllabic separation that showed the ways in which each syllable was to be memorized and repeated in a regular pattern and accompanied by bodily movement.

To this day, when one attends a performance of a Vedic sacrifice, one sees students sitting near the Vedic fires, learning the *krama pāṭha* system, and moving their heads, hands, and wrists in accordance with the rhythm. In the twenty-first century, this learning is augmented by books; this was not the case during the Vedic (both early and late) period of early India, from about 1500 to 300 BCE. The *Ṛg Veda* alone consists of some ten thousand verses, and the recitation of such a work involved mental feat of great magnitude indeed. But the sheer human effort of this memorization occurred in very everyday contexts — fathers teaching sons and teachers instructing students in small villages across the Gangetic plain.

The Brāhmaṇas

Enough ambiguity existed in Vedic compositions to leave room for an expansive interpretive tradition. The Brāhmaṇas are groups of texts concerned with both the etiology and the performance of sacrifice. The oral composition of the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇa and Sūtra material describing the sacrifice in fact belong to two distinct chronological layers, one much later than the other. The sacrifice during the Vedic period was probably a simpler version of what we see described in the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras. We might formulate the problems of these texts in the following way: What are the outgrowths and results of such a sacrificial system, both in practice and in the idealized textual representation? The authors of the prose Brāhmaṇas developed an elaborate ritual philoso-

phy in which the central questions were metapractical as well as metaphysical.[3] They ask, "What is the origin of *this* sacrificial practice, and why does it work the way it does?" Etiological narrative is mixed with ritual instruction, and the progression of thought is associative rather than strictly logical along the lines of later classical Indian philosophy. Each Veda has its Brāhmaṇa; or putting it in a general way, each form of knowledge had its own ritual elaboration and explanation. (The *Ṛg Veda* has the *Kauṣītaki* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*s*;* the *Yajur Veda* has the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa;* the *Sāma Veda* has the *Pañcaviṃśa* and the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*s; and the *Atharva Veda* has the later *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa.*)

Etiological narratives in the Brāhmaṇas can take a number of different forms; some passages provide etymological explanations of the names of the gods and *ṛṣi*s; others narrate arguments between *deva*s and *asura*s that result in certain ritual procedures, and so on. Particularly colorful passages in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* depict attempts by the gods to attain immortality by performing the *agnihotra* (twice-daily offering), the new- and full-moon rituals, and others. Prajāpati, now emerging as a powerful creator god, corrects them on their procedures for laying out the correct number of bricks for laying down the fire altar. Prajāpati in this story is homologized with death (as he has the power of immortality) as well as the year (he possesses the requisite 360 days in the year, represented by the bricks in the fire altar, *ŚB* 10.4.2.1–10). Further narratives connect the act of sacrifice with the act of creation. In one story, Prajāpati's joints are loosened through the act of creating, and one must put his joints back together in the act of sacrifice (*ŚB* 1.6.3.35–37). In yet another, Prajāpati "emits" from himself created beings, such as Agni, the great eater, as well as Vāc, the goddess of speech, with whom he has an ambivalent and difficult relationship. As the above stories illustrate, the Brāhmaṇas are fond of creating *bandhu*s, or "essential connections," between cosmic and ritual elements.

The Śrauta Sūtra World

The Śrauta Sūtras acted as manuals or ritual handbooks, compiled to give directions to those performing public rites in Vedic times. They are ritual manuals for ritual actors. And the rites themselves are, above all, formal, non-domestic performances, in the sense that many might gather to watch, or produce goods for the rituals, but only a small minority would participate in them.[4] As David Knipe, Frederick Smith, and Timothy Lubin suggest in their studies of contemporary Vedic practices,

these rites were models to which each individual priest and sacrificer would aspire, a kind of blueprint or cosmic prestige that would accrue to one's person, to one's village, and to one's *gotra,* or lineage.[5] Their performance signified competence in the ways of the "three worlds" — this world, the intermediate world, and heaven.

The Śrauta Sūtras are based on the earlier, Brāhmaṇa literature, which they follow in style and phraseology. They contain knowledge essential for the cosmic recipe of the sacrifice to turn out correctly: (1) detailed descriptions of the ceremony's procedures; (2) different kinds of ceremonies to be performed at different times; (3) ritual actors to be involved in the ceremony; and (4) utensils involved in the ceremony; and, most importantly for our purposes, (5) mantras to be spoken during the ritual procedures. These mantras are incorporated directly from the Vedic Saṃhitās. The Vedic schools also produced the basic shortened formulae, or *sūtra*s, of how to perform these sacrifices (although some would argue that even these, too, are idealized types, and not recipes or descriptions of the actual procedures).[6] The manuals for the public sacrifices are the Śrauta Sūtras and contain ritual directions as well as *viniyoga*s, or applications of Vedic mantras. The Vedic *śākhā*s, or branches, are extended from the Brāhmaṇas to the Sūtras as well. (The Śrauta Sūtras of the *Ṛg Veda* are the *Āśvalāyana* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*s; the *Yajur Veda* has the *Baudhāyana* and *Āpastamba;* the *Sāma Veda* has the *Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* and the *Atharva Veda,* the *Kauśika Sūtra*.) These texts give directions as to the establishment of the ritual grounds, the shape of the altars, the mantras to be recited at the appropriate moments, and most importantly, the actions and roles of the various priests involved in the sacrifice. Those officiating at the sunrise ritual would have followed one of the Śrauta Sūtras in order to know the basics of procedure. In addition, the Śrauta Sūtras outline the appropriate donations of the *yajamāna* to the participating priests. The Śrauta Sūtras tend to have the character of "recipe books" or "manuals," but are also clear and significant evidence as to how the actual sacrifice was performed during Vedic times. In contemporary Vedic revivals, specialists who are Vedic scholars and professors of Indian universities bring their knowledge of the Śrauta Sūtras to act as consultants in the proceedings. Many of the professors are also trained traditionally as *paṇḍit*s, or teachers.

On many occasions during the rites, ritual actors understood one ceremony as a form of another, and in order for the cosmic import of both the largest and the tiniest ritual to be understood, the authors of the Śrauta Sūtras arranged these ceremonies into three classes: (1) the full-

moon ceremony *(darśapūrṇamāsa)*, which includes basic offerings called *iṣṭi*s; (2) the more elaborate animal sacrifices following the model set by the offering an animal to Agni and Soma; and (3) the Soma ceremonies, where the crushed, sacred drink of eloquence was offered in a basic "model rite" called the *agniṣṭoma,* and from which much more elaborate, twelve-day or even year-long rites derive. Soma gives a particular kind of eloquence in reciting and composing mantras. This threefold division is fairly unanimous in the Sūtra literature, and the authors proceeded in exactly that order when naming and describing the sacrifices. Most importantly, they developed basic intellectual categories of division and organization: the *prakṛti* was the basic model of ritual; the *vikṛti* was the modification of the model ritual according to specific needs.

We might view the Śrauta Sūtras as ritual prescriptions, but also as ritual commentaries on particular acts and on the appropriateness of certain mantras to accompany those acts. The texts themselves reveal a keen awareness of longevity in the use of several generations of texts. The *vidhi,* or rules, adopted in any given Śrauta Sūtra are exactly reflected in the other ritual manuals of the same school. So, too, the Gṛhya Sūtras are in large part domestic reflections of those ritual performances. Such continuity and longevity means that the rules of ritual performance create a kind of corporate identity that determines lineage and pedigree as well as cosmic prestige and intellectual activity. For instance, a person who performed a *sattra,* or year-long soma sacrifice, would be remembered as having performed one and treated with appropriate honor and prestige for the rest of his life and in future generations. The more often he performed it, the more sacred power would accrue to him.

The literary style and content of the Śrauta Sūtras reflect this emphasis on sacred power, and the related need for organization and systematization as signs of power, on the part of each Vedic school. Imagine, for instance, being given a set of recipes from a particular royal household and needing to organize them according to what is being cooked: "chicken," "mutton," "vegetable dishes," "dessert dishes," and so on. In this way, the Śrauta Sūtra authors are no different. They usually begin by describing a basic rite, such as the *agniṣṭoma,* or basic Soma ritual. This is what a Vedic student would learn first. They then go on to describe the more elaborate sacrifices that use the basic structure of the *agniṣṭoma,* such as the *agnicayana,* or large fire sacrifice, the *rājasūya,* or kingly coronation, and the *vājapeya,* or sacrifice for rain.

In addition, the Śrauta Sūtras describe the basic priestly functions—

who would do what during the ceremonies. The Yajur-Vedic Sūtras dealt with sacrificial procedures and focused on the *adhvaryu,* or priest in charge of procedures. In contemporary Vedic ritual enactments, he is somewhat like a "master of ceremonies" who directs the action and consults the Śrauta Sūtras if there is any need for clarification. In addition, he is usually seen separating the Soma and distributing it among the priests. Śrauta Sūtras also deal with the *hotṛ,* the recitation priest, who chants the right mantras at the right time. He usually sits to the side of the sacrificial fires and is constantly watching to make sure his poetry is inserted appropriately when it is not being recited by him. The Sāma Vedic priests are called the *udgatṛ*s, and there are moments in the ritual when they all gather to chant special chants. They are the true "musicians" or singers in the ritual and are said to be descended from the Gandharvas, or celestial musicians. They wear their hair long in imitation of their celestial counterparts. Finally, the Brāhmaṇa priest, derived (perhaps later) from Atharva Vedic tradition, sits near the south side of the sacrificial ground, silently supervises the entire ritual, and is responsible for repairing every mistake caused by the other priests. Silence in the Veda tends to signify either great insight or great defeat; of course in this case insight is indicated.

How did the Śrauta Sūtras arrange the act of sacrifice? Each sacrificial arena consists of a large rectangle, about the size of a small soccer field. One half of the arena is divided into three main fires, each symbolically representing a different power and a different function. Ideally, the fire itself originated from the home of the *āhitāgni,* or household keeper of the fire, who lives near the sacrificial arena, keeps miniature versions of the fires in his home, and recites mantras with his wife to keep them burning throughout the day. (Villages in Andhra Pradesh still reflect this arrangement and have been documented thanks to the work of David Knipe and others.) In the larger public arena, the *gārhapatya* fire represents the fire of the home and hearth, the *āhavanīya* fire, the source of priestly power, and the *dakṣiṇa* fire, the southern fire that protects against the demons who might emerge from that inauspicious direction. In the middle of the rectangular field is the cart that holds the Soma, the sacred drink imbibed by both the priests and the gods. At the far end is the *mahāvedi,* the round fire pit into which clarified butter and other offerings are given at various pivotal points in the sacrifice itself. Between the main fire altars are various smaller altars that serve particular functions, such as the crushing of the Soma, and various stations of the

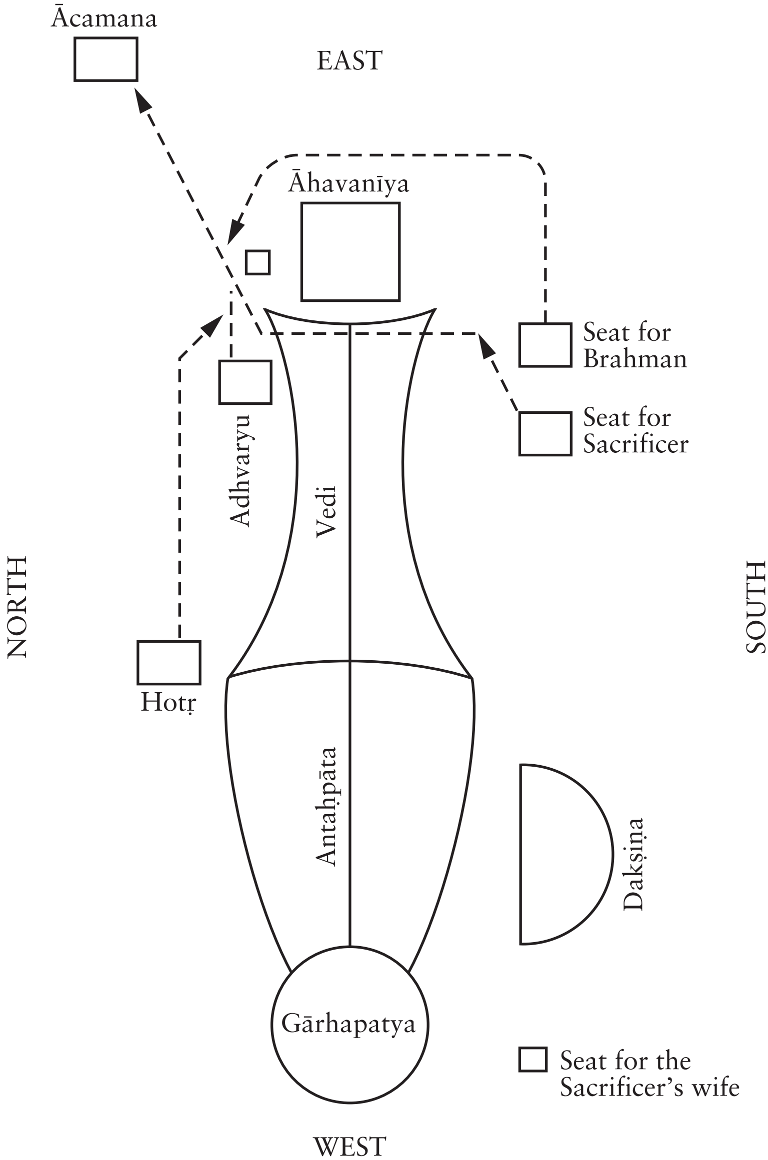


Figure 1. Basic vedi for the Agnihotra, Darśapūrṇamāsa and Iṣṭis.

priests whose role is to recite Vedic verses at different parts of the sacrifice. (See Figure 1.)

Most of the Śrauta Sūtras also describe another, separate ritual role for the sponsor, the *yajamāna,* of the Vedic sacrifice and his wife. This couple provides the economic resources for the entire sacrifice to be performed. The *yajamāna* holds a special seat during the proceedings and at various moments at the beginning and the end of them. His wife, too, is present at various moments of the sacrifice, such as the *pravargya,* or secret ceremony before the Soma sacrifice, and the sacrifice itself. In contrast, at other times she is covered with a parasol. She represents fertility and a kind of cosmic sexuality, and her public role is to be noted as a major exception to the general role of women during the sacrificial performances.

A close examination of the introductory explanatory sections *(paribhāṣās)* of several Śrauta Sūtras can give us a good idea of the various functions of the texts, where a general principle applies and particular subsets of that principle also occur.

> In this connection [there is] this perpetual general rule: in all *iṣṭi*s and animal sacrifices the norms for the *darśapūrṇamāsa* [new- and full-moon sacrifices] are followed: *juhvāvacane* means "if there is no special direction [to the contrary the oblations should be offered] with the *juhū* ladle." *Ekāṅgavacane, dakṣiṇam pratīyat* means "if there is a question of one limb one should understand the right one." *Dadātīti yajamānam* means "whenever the word 'he gives' occurs one should understand that the sacrificer [is the agent of the action]." (*BŚS* 6.15.5; *KŚS* 1.8.45; *ĀŚS* 1.1.12, 15f, and 2.1.6)[7]

In these sections, we have a set of ritual directions which are general in nature—whenever such and such a direction occurs, x or y ritual actor is intended. Moreover, a general model (new- and full-moon sacrifice) is stated as the one to be followed in all subsidiary cases. Finally, different actors are referred to in their functions, such as the sacrificer, or *yajamāna.* This is a very common set of ritual instructions following a very common style for the Śrauta Sūtras.

The Gṛhya Sūtra World

The manuals for the more domestic rites are contained in texts called the Gṛhya Sūtras. These are a valuable source of information for the kinds of rituals that would inform "everyday life," such as the birth of a child, the funeral for a brahmin, getting rid of an enemy, a rival cowife, and not getting lost in the woods. These Sūtras, too, contain ritual instructions as

well as which Vedic mantras to use in which situation. The role of women becomes more prominent in these domestic rituals. Women play a particular role in funeral rituals, rituals for the birth of a child, the intelligence of a child, and the peace of the household.

Several compelling sections of the Gṛhya Sūtras describe the duration and nature of Vedic education, including induction of the students by the guru, the ritual festival at the end of a period of Vedic study, and the parting ritual between student and teacher before the student returns home to take up permanent residence as a householder. In the Gṛhya Sūtras, we see the beginning of an emphasis on personal learning and self-sufficiency, in which the actual sacrificial arena becomes less and less important, and the internalization of mantra on the part of the mobile priest becomes far more the modus operandi of the Vedic virtuoso.

The difference between the Śrauta and Gṛhya is also indicated by the different kinds of sacrifices held in the household rather than in public. For example, in the domestic *gṛhya kāmya* rites, or rites performed in order to fulfill a particular desire, the sacrificial material is boiled rice, and not an animal. Women are allowed to chant mantras as they follow their husband around the duplicates of the public fires. And the householder is also dissuaded from using a particular mantra (*VS* 12.69) when he is plowing his field because that stanza has already been prescribed (*KS* 17.2.10ff) for the drawing of furrows at the more public Śrauta *agnicayana* ceremony.

From a literary point of view, the Gṛhya Sūtras are far from being identical; they vary widely in mantras used, mode of arrangement, and other details. However, certain similar rules and rituals are found in Gṛhya Sūtra manuals belonging to the same Vedic *śākhā,* or branch. Viewing the Vedic tradition through the lens of commentarial tradition is very important to keep the sense of consistency with Vedic practice.

What do the Śrauta Sūtras and the Gṛhya Sūtras have in common?[8] The relationship between the solemn rites and their three fires, and the domestic rites is clear; they share a great deal and have parallel rites. The basic assumption is that those who use these domestic manuals are well versed in these general, more public rules. Many of the rules elaborated on in the *paribhāṣā* sections—general rules of interpretation and general information for those who wish to sacrifice or officiate systematically—are applicable to both Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtra rituals. Although some of the Gṛhya Sūtras do begin with a set of general rules, the general Vedic view is that since the Gṛhya Sūtras are annexed to the Śrauta Sūtras, they do not need a special *paribhāṣā.*[9] And some of the rules are extendable or generalizable

from Śrauta to Gṛhya.[10] The purpose of the domestic *āgrayaṇa* is, for instance, the same as that of the corresponding Śrauta rite.[11]

Some Gṛhya Sūtras make explicit references to the *śruti* itself—the truth to be seen or heard by the *ṛṣi*s—and the basis of the Śrauta system. According to later authors and commentators, they are to show that all Gṛhya, or domestic, rites are based on *śruti,* which, however, is extinct or has been lost; "their former existence may, however, be inferred from usage."[12] In addition, Gṛhya Sūtras frequently make explicit references to a definite Śrauta ritual. For example, in the Gṛhya Sūtras, the ceremonies for cremation are said to be the same as those for a man who has set up the Śrauta fires.[13] Occasionally, the Gṛhya Sūtras also refer to "exceptions which should be made for someone who has not performed the Śrauta rites."

Finally, as is usually the case with commentarial literature of any kind, the subsequent textual genre tends to supercede or compete with that on which it comments. Thus occasionally an element of a Gṛhya ritual is put on par or identified with a Śrauta ritual.[14] The tendency to recommend the rites prescribed, to enhance their value, and to magnify their effect leads an author to say that the man who recites a definite mantra acquires the same merit as the performer of the final bath after an *aśvamedha* (*RVidh* 4.23.5; *AVPar* 16.2.3, 23.14.2) and of a *rājasūya,* or kingly coronation.

The Vidhāna World

In the late Vedic period, there emerged the Vidhāna literature, which consists entirely of *viniyoga*s, or applications of Vedic mantras, outside the sacrificial situation entirely. These texts imply that the brahmin himself, through the mere utterance of mantras, can change any situation in which he might find himself. These Vidhāna texts are, in a way, a natural extension of the Gṛhya Sūtras, although the domestic ritual itself is less present and the focus is on the use of the Vedic text alone as having magical powers. This is in part due to the idea of *svādhyāya,* or self-study, about which Charles Malamoud and Timothy Lubin have written so persuasively.[15] It creates a kind of Vedic universe in which mental agility alone can account for Vedic knowledge, and the prestige of the Veda becomes embodied not in sacrificial action, but rather in the verbal and imaginative skill of the reciter and performer.

Unlike the preceding genres, the Vidhāna literature is more explicitly pragmatic and has been characterized as a lesser class of writings, and

part of the "nonsolemn" rites. Each Veda has its own Vidhāna — thus the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* the *Yajur Vidhāna,* and the *Sāma Vidhāna.* (Śaunaka's fourth-century BCE *Ṛg Vidhāna,* or "Application" of the Verses, especially rich in these so-called magical associations, is a primary concern of this book.) The Vidhāna literature is characterized by three important elements, summed up in the second verse of the *Ṛg Vidhāna:* "The mantras attain a result by the correct method laid down in the *brāhmaṇa* [text]; they give success, when they are employed in the ritual manner." The efficacious and appropriate mantra is usually the focal point of each of the *vidhi*s; the actual rite involved becomes part of the background. Thus we can generally characterize the Vidhāna literature by three elements: (1) its emphasis on the personal ambition or desire of the reciter; (2) its emphasis on *japa,* or soft recitation of the mantra; (3) its belief that the mantra can be efficacious without necessarily being accompanied by a rite; and (4) the attendant emphasis on visualization — through both mental and physical imagery. As Pradnya Kulkarini observes in her recent and intensive study of the Vidhana literature, the rites do not even require the *gṛhya,* or domestic, fire, and brahmins can perform these rites for all people (including the fourth *śūdra* class) for a fee. Thus, the Vidhana acts as a kind of link text between the Vedic and Purāṇic religions, and their focus is on "transmission and activation of the power."[16]

The emphasis on the personal ambition or desire of the reciter is not something new; for instance, *āśis,* or "strong desire," has its initial debut in the Brāhmaṇa literature and tends to mean a strong ambition or wish on the part of the mantra-speaker. *Āśis* is more fully developed in the Śaunaka school, particularly in the *Bṛhaddevatā,* where the author attempts to reduce all forms of names to that of action, which in turn is related to the desire of the speaker. As he argues, "Names are also based on some form of desire, for who would name someone an inauspicious name in the hope that they live long in this world?"[17] This connection between forms of action and forms of desire is particularly strong in the late Vedic period and in the Śaunaka school.

From these ideas about desire it is only a short step to an emphasis on *kāma,* the more traditional word for desire, which allows the speaker the ability to perform rites almost entirely according to will. All the Vidhānas emphasize these *kāma* rites, as part and parcel of the rites that can accompany mantra, such as fasting for three days, creating an image on the ground, and so on. The *Ṛg Vidhāna* devotes several pages to such rites, as well as to those purificatory in nature. So, too, the *Sāma Vidhāna* devotes much of its introductory passage to *kāma* rites that accompany

the recitation of mantra. Thus the author of the *Ṛg Vidhāna* states that mantras have specific, even "tangible," purposes and can address the fourfold objects of desire — long life, heaven, wealth, and sons, in addition to "other desires by the hundreds" (*RVidh* 1.8).

The next characteristic, *japa,* or uninterrupted soft chanting, while present in the Gṛhya Sūtras (*ŚGS* 4.8.14; *JGS* 2.8), is especially prevalent in the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (3.8.6; 3.10.4; 3.12.1; 4.1.2; 4.24.6). In the morning one must recite softly, and at noon and in the afternoon aloud. In addition there are three kinds of *japa: mandra* (low), *upāṃsu* (inaudibly uttered), and *mānasa* (mentally revolved). Each one of these is ten times better than the one before. Many rules apply for recitation before one takes one's daily food. In addition, many rules apply in extenuating circumstances: in the case of prodigies, or extremely talented students; sudden change in the weather; a death, a *śrāddha,* or honoring of the dead; finding oneself in the neighborhood of impure persons or objects. All these should be influential in halting a recitation. *Japa* is prescribed in the case of commencement of Vedic study and is to be performed sitting on a seat of *kuśa* grass; it begins with the *Gāyatrī,* the syllable *om,* and the *vyāhṛti*s (*RVidh* 1.59.61).[18] Not surprisingly, the *Sāma Vidhāna* specifies various ritual effects of chanting. The same *sāman* chanted under different conditions could yield different results (*SV* 3.2.7ff).

Outside its ritual contexts, such as fasting, simple recitation allows for several benefits to be obtained: by the mere performance of *japa,* one can attain the recollection of previous births (2.45) and the attainment of *siddha*-hood, or a state of success, or release from rebirth.[19] In an intriguing example, the recitation of *RV* 9.1–67 allows for different kinds of recitation and recollection to yield different kinds of fruit: simple recitation is meritorious, and one becomes pure; in recollection of a mantra, one remembers the highest realm, but retention in memory allows for the even higher abode of Brahmā. Recitation can also be associated with quite intangible fruits, so that the recitation of *RV* mantras 10.45 and 10.151 is prescribed for the sake of religious faith (*RVidh* 3.56; 6.70cd–71ab).[20] The *Ṛg Veda khila* 4.11 is muttered for the sake of mental ease (*RV* 4.103cd–104ab); *RV* 10.177, muttered alone, destroys illusion.

Continuing in the theme of nonritual and nontangible fruits, the Vidhāna literature is quite clear that, even when mantras are combined with rites, they are done so with a view toward the *intention* of the mantra speaker. For instance, according to *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.6.1ff, the *Sāvitrī* mantra should first be uttered without rites or other activities. Only then

should it be combined with ritual, which makes it even more powerful. In that case it should gradually be used according to one's wish.

Finally, the use of visualization and imagery is significantly prominent in the Vidhāna literature. The Vidhāna uses the term *kṛtyā* to mean an actual image. While the term *kṛtyā* also means, in a more general way "performance" or "achievement," it also has the meaning of an achievement caused by supernormal means.[21] Its prevalence is marked in, although not exclusive to, the Vidhāna literature.[22] It is more concretely a figure, usually female, used to terrify others or to work evil, or "a figure representing a person (enemy) and subjected to various tortures which are intended to injure the performer's victim." These *kṛtyā*s are usually made of wood and are subsequently sacrificed or burned. They are also made of sand, where they are later trodden on, or of iron, copper, rice, or husks. The *Yajur Vidhāna* (39) gives an intriguing illustration of this use of images in order to steal a cow: one should mutter *Yajur Veda* 16.48 and insert the name of the cow in the formula. One should call her in the voice similar to that of her owner and make an image of her out of her own excretions and tie it while pronouncing her name. Then, holding the image by the left hand, one should make offerings of milk, curds, honey, and ghee. Finally, one gets the cow. In each of these rituals, the figure is usually destroyed in the manner in which one wants to destroy one's enemy, or overcome in the way in which one wants to overcome a particular person. While this tendency toward the creation of the image is, in many ways, archetypal "homeopathic" magic, I believe it can also be discussed in the wider context of metonymical thinking and the expansion of the Vedic associative imagination. This ritual shows an associative connection between the effect on the image and the effect in the world.

Related to this use of physical imagery is the use of mental visualization. In the Vidhāna literature, mental visualization was especially useful in the context of Śrī, visualized in the *Gāyatrī* mantra, and Puruṣa, the Cosmic Man, visualized in chanting of the *Puruṣa-sūkta* (*RV* 10.90). Here, the Cosmic Man is visualized as being Puruṣottama, a special form of Viṣṇu. In these rites, one literally performs *pūjā* mentally, designing a lotus-shaped seat for the god in the middle of the fire that has been kindled, and meditates on Viṣṇu there, "whose splendour is equal to the fire at the end of the world" (*RVidh* 4.170). So too, Śrī is visualized in *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.105; one should regularly offer lotuses into the water at night, stopping only after visualizing Śrī. In the *Sāma Vidhāna* one chant is particularly powerful because it explains how, in the darkest night of a

month at a crossroads, one can conjure up, with the simple production of an utterance, a helper with a spear who will kill the enemy.[23]

Sight itself also becomes an important trope in the practice of muttering mantras: as *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.70 says, while muttering this sacred text, one should not look at *śūdra*s and other men like that. If one does, one can become pure again after sipping water, and one should also look at objects considered auspicious, such as a cow, a fire, or the sun. In fact, in many cases, actual seeing, mental seeing, and the creation of an image are bound up together. In the case of the *Yajur Vidhāna,* which, as one would imagine, is more concerned with the performance of ritual formulae than with the uttering of mantras, the question of visualization remains paramount. For instance, for obtaining an Asura-maiden, one should perform a particular rite of burning fire under a banyan tree and offer one lakh of Aśoka flowers filled with ghee, accompanied by the *Yajur Veda* 27.12. Then an Asura-maiden will appear before one's eyes. To gain the favor of a king, one offers chaff with the words of *Yajur Veda* 35.18 while visualizing the king. Alternately, one may make an image of the king out of sesame, melted butter, and a hundred flowers and offer the image into the fire while uttering the words of *Yajur Veda* 26.46.

The World of Śākhās*, or "Branches" of Interpretation*

In the preceding discussion of sources and texts, the word *śākhā,* or branch, was mentioned frequently as a school of Vedic interpretation. The focus here will be on two particular *śākhā*s, the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana schools of the *Ṛg Veda,* and the ways in which they have interpreted Ṛg Vedic mantras over time. Thus the word *śākhā* itself deserves some consideration, given our interest in commentarial genre and associative worlds. The word *śākhā* has gone through its own form of metaphoric change. In early India, it was used metaphorically to imply increased expansiveness: "The *hotṛ* singers, whose unmatched devotions like a tree's branches, part in all directions" (*RV* 10.94.3) Later, in the etymological dictionary called the *Nighaṇṭu,* the term developed the sense of a limb of the body, an arm or leg, or a finger; it also came to mean the surface of a body, a door post, or the wing of a building (2.5). Still later, it developed its abstract sense of "division," or "subdivision" — particularly in the epic and later literature. Thus the word *śākhā* comes to mean a branch or school of the Veda, each school adhering to its own traditional text and interpretation.[24] We have implicit in the word an understanding of a common object, if not a common style of interpretation.

The Gṛhya Sūtras explicitly state that one should obey the rules given by the authorities of one's own branch, or tradition of the Veda. According to these texts, practicing what is taught in other *śākhā*s is a wrongful act. This rule implies that the directions of one's own *śākhā* should be followed, even if they are formulated in an incomplete way or if they seem to be redundant. Only when one's own manual is completely silent on an obligation may one consult a Sūtra of another *śākhā*. Special rules that are common to all are given by those who promulgate the Veda and must also be obeyed. If this is not the case, then the students' practice should be as follows: "disciplined and cultured persons who have attained a high level of excellence and who are part of the hereditary structure of the Vedic schools."[25]

Śākhā was not always textual in nature, however. Scholars agree that a mass of floating customs was recognized in the Gṛhya Sūtra practices and therefore included in the *śākhā*.[26] *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.1.1 states that the knowledge of domestic rites may include prescriptions from customary practice. Customary practice itself should be old, related to a group or locality, and followed by obligation, hallowed by *dharma*, either in *śruti* (revealed) or *smṛti* (remembered) form, and systematized by the Vedic schools. Thus a *śākhā* could involve an interaction between textual and nontextual practice.

The Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana schools of the *Ṛg Veda* describe the *hautra*—the public duties and recitations of the *hotṛ*—in a systematic form. And, of course, the public duties of the *hotṛ* involve, for the most part, *viniyoga*s, or applications of particular Vedic mantras combined with certain public, bodily ritual acts.[27]

Why the choice of the Ṛg Vedic schools? Some might argue that it would make more sense to choose the Yajur Vedic *śākhā*s, rather than the Ṛg Vedic ones. The mantras in the *Yajur Veda* are much more well-matched to the ritual procedures of the ritual Sūtras. This fact should not be a surprise, as the Yajur Vedic mantras are specifically designed for use in ritual. Thus the Yajur Vedic application tends to be straightforward, and the connections between ritual and mantra are quite clear. This same point was brought up by Vedic commentator Sāyaṇa, in the fourteenth-century Vijaynagaran kingdom, and by contemporary Vedic exegetes as well.[28]

This fact makes the applications of the *Yajur Veda* in the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna literature the *least* interesting to examine. The Ṛg Vedic mantras, by contrast, tend to be indirect and metaphorical, or dependent on some detail that may or may not be apparent at first glance

and thus require a great deal more imagination and interpretation to understand. These indirect connections created a great deal of anxiety on the part of early Indological scholars, who all but gave up on the task of finding a system of rules for application. I take the indirect, metaphorical, and associative nature of Ṛg Vedic applications in the Ṛg Vedic *śākhā*s as an intriguing challenge in poetic interpretation—one that can be buttressed by recent advances in performance theory and theories of metonymy and associative thought. Turning now to the specific Ṛg Vedic schools, the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana *śākhā*s: later literature mentions the existence of three, twenty-one, or twenty-seven *śākhā*s of the *Ṛg Veda*.[29] Of these many schools, only some of their ritual texts, called Kalpa Sūtras, are still extant: the Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras, the Āśvalāyana Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras, the *Kauṣītaki Gṛhya Sūtra,* the *Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra,* and the *Pāraskara Dharma Sūtra.* As can be seen by this list, the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana *śākhā*s are the two schools with both a Śrauta and a Gṛhya Sūtra; thus they can give us some overall view of the development of a poetic image and its uses in ritual over time. We know that they thrived in the middle to late Vedic periods. Michael Witzel has written convincingly that the Śāṅkhāyana school is earlier and located in the Kuru Pañcāla region, in the middle of the Gangetic plain between the Ganges and the Gomati rivers.[30]

The textual traditions of both Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana schools are complex and raise important interpretive questions. Both schools are thought to have followed their own distinct *saṃhitā*s, or mantra collections, which differed from other *śākhā*s and were quite unique. They were named as the Bāṣkala and the Śākala recensions, respectively.[31] According to one commentator, Gārgya Nārāyaṇa, the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* follows both the Bāṣkala and the Śākala recensions of the *Ṛg Veda,* whereas it is fairly clear that the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* follows only the Bāṣkala recension.[32] Some scholars thought these *saṃhitā*s to be nonexistent, but more recent scholarship shows that manuscripts are indeed extant. The difference between these two recensions is minimal and only really refers to the *khila*s or the *vālakhilya*s, or "extra portions" of the hymns.

The relations between these two Śrauta Sūtras and their respective Brāhmaṇas is also complex. Śāṅkhāyana's author is putatively called Suyajña, known only from one of the colophons of the chapters.[33] He shares a great many passages with the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa,* a *Ṛg Veda* Brāhmaṇa. Nonetheless *Śāṅkhāyaṇa Śrauta Sūtra* also agrees with a number of other Brāhmaṇas, such as the *Śatapatha* or the *Jaiminīya,* so

it is clear that he is familiar with a variety of Vedic branches of knowledge.[34] The author of the *Āśvalyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* follows the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* also a *Ṛg Veda* Brāhmaṇa. However, he uses a tone that is slightly more distant. He also mentions several authorities not mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* leading scholars to conclude that he is a little more removed from his Brāhmaṇa sources.[35]

Both Śrauta Sūtra texts strictly divide the Soma and the non-Soma sacrifices, with the non-Soma sacrifice beginning both works. Both texts begin with a discussion of the *iṣṭi*s, the new- and full-moon sacrifices, and the animal sacrifices. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* embarks on a new arrangement of the sacrifices that is not in his source, the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.* In addition, the author of the *Āśvalāyana* also adds a great deal of material not in its *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* especially with regard to the *ahīna*s and the *sattra*s (9–12), as well as the special sacrifices, such as the *vājapeya, rājasūya,* the *aśvamedha,* and the *puruṣamedha.*

Most significantly, both manuals are concerned with the recitation of the *Ṛg Veda* and therefore primarily with the duties of the *hotṛ*. However, there are numerous other kinds of genres within the texts aside from the list of ritual duties, including passages on style of recitation, *sandhi,* high and low tones, as well as myths, such as the Śunaḥśepa episode.[36]

How are the schools represented in their more domestic concerns, the Gṛhya Sūtras? Scholars have tended to comment that the two *śākhā*s seem to complement each other, supplying information that the other might lack.[37] Both the *Āśvalāyana* and the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*s are even more loosely connected to their schools than their Śrauta Sūtra counterparts. The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* has one southern and one northern tradition; here I deal with the northern tradition, accompanied by the commentary of Nārāyaṇa. Most of the themes are the Gṛhya Sūtras of the Ṛg Vedic schools are the same as other Gṛhya Sūtras—animal sacrifices, the five great sacrifices, the duties of a householder, studenthood, disease, death, and the transitions of a brahmin life. *Āśvalāyana* is distinct in that it deals with different marriage rites (*ĀGS* 1.6) as well as the rite of a king putting on his armor before a battle (*ĀGS* 3.12).

Śāṅkhāyana's language is more archaic and belongs exclusively to the Bāṣkala branch. In addition to the basic contents it shares with the *Āśvalāyana,* it includes more on women's lives, such as wedding traditions (*ŚGS* 1.6ff), as well as the ceremony to drive away demons when a woman is confined (*ŚGS* 11.23), and the getting up of a mother from her

childbed (*ŚGS* 1.25). Other ceremonies distinctly treated are the *vṛṣotsarga,* or "bull-freeing" ceremony (*ŚGS* 3.11), and the ceremony for averting evil (*svastyayana)* for those crossing water (*ŚGS* 4.14). The two schools differ in their treatment of the Śravaṇa sacrifice to the serpents (*ŚGS* 4.15; *ĀGS* 2.1). Some of the later chapters of the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra,* concerned with journeys, consecrations, ponds, and diseases, are possibly later additions. *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* also draws on *Manu,* but it is difficult to say whether this might have been an "original" *Manu* or a later addition to the Gṛhya text. Intriguingly, both the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana schools also refer to a number of non-Ṛg Vedic mantras. This fact shows another intriguing connection between the text of the Vedic *śākhā*s and the customary practices associated with them.[38]

The fact that the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana schools have ritual manuals gives us a certain amount of control and contour to our study, limiting the *viniyoga*s (applications) to a particular style of interpretation common to the *śākhā.* In addition, limiting the study to two *śākhā*s prevents the temptation to refer to a large, sweeping set of texts from all over early India. The lens of the specific schools gives us a clear sense of the intertextuality and tradition—a tradition that (like the present author) is committed to the *Ṛg Veda* and finds it the most intriguing set of poetic verses to interpret and to apply in ritual.

A Changing Vedic Milieu and Its Texts

Given our focus on particular *śākhā*s and their development over time, a word is in order about the changing social circumstances of the late Vedic period and the texts that inhabit this milieu. The fate of the sacrifice in the late Vedic period has been shown by many scholars to be the result of an amalgam of tendencies, grappling perhaps with the heterodox Jain and Buddhist criticism from without, and Upaniṣadic antimaterialism from within. As Jan Gonda, Brian Smith, and Timothy Lubin have pointed out, the ritual manuals of the late Vedic period show an emphasis upon the Gṛhya or household rituals in addition to the more public, Śrauta performances.[39] Particularly in regard to the Śrauta performances, textual and epigraphic evidence shows a marked decline from the first millennium BCE onward in the practice of these more public rites.[40] Moreover, the latter parts of many late Vedic texts show a "grafting" of the later, classical rituals (such as, for example, the consecration of a temple) onto traditional Vedic sacrificial practices.[41]

One of the basic characteristics of this shift in emphasis was a turn to

the study and private recitation of Vedic mantra as an end in itself.[42] Whereas the earlier Śrauta Sūtras were concerned with the proper, public recitation of mantra by brahmins in rites involving the labor and industry of entire villages, the later Gṛhya Sūtras are quite emphatic in their rules for the secrecy of Vedic study and, more importantly, the secrecy of recitation itself. Preliminary recitations of certain mantras, such as the syllable *om* and the *Gāyatrī* mantra, alone ensure that the Veda offering is indeed complete. While the Śrauta Sūtras emphasized the tending, movement, and placement of the sacrificial fire in the public realm, the Gṛhya Sūtras recast the sacrifice in a verbal form, in which the reciting brahmin priest becomes a walking embodiment of the sacrificial fire and, as such, accompanies the domestic fire rituals in this new role.[43] Charles Malamoud discusses this process in his study of the *svādhyāya*, or recitation manual, found in the second chapter of *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.[44] In personal recitation, Vedic mantras substitute for each material element of the sacrifice: the Ṛg Vedic mantras are the milk offerings; the verses from another Veda, the *Sāma Veda,* are the Soma offerings; and so forth. Mantric recitation thus becomes both the Vedic stamp on household rites and the way in which the sacrifice is recast to meet daily needs. Thus the question we will be most concerned with is: What is the changing interpretation of the Ṛg Vedic mantras from the Brāhmaṇas to the Śrauta Sūtras to the Gṛhya Sūtras to the Vidhānas? There is more to say about *svādhyāya* and the late Vedic imagination; these case studies suggest not just internalization but also a kind of continuing *external* use of mantra for increasingly broader purposes, much like contemporary forms of advertising.

CONCLUSIONS

The worlds of Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna texts show a change in attitudes toward sacrificial procedure and terminology. The Śrauta world is concerned with public, formal rituals that concern an entire community, from the basic vegetable offerings (*iṣṭi*s) to the elaborate *rājasūya* (kingly coronation sacrifice). The Gṛhya world is focused on the individual sacrificer's prowess in his own home, and his transition through various stages of life, such as hair cutting, marriage, setting out on a journey, maintaining the three fires in his home, and death. The Vidhāna world extends this sacrificial prowess to as many different situations as possible and uses mantra, not sacrificial implements, as its main weapon.

All these worlds exist within specific interpretive traditions, called

*śākhā*s. For the purposes of focus and clarity, the kind of intellectual history I develop is not a general one, but a specific one, that follows the line of a particular tradition (Ṛg Vedic) over the course of both public and domestic rituals. By focusing on the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana schools, I develop a history of metonymic associations — ways in which the words of a particular Ṛg Vedic verse have been interpreted for use in the Vedic rituals, as well as for more "general" use in the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* over time. As Glucklich similarly argues in his important work *The End of Magic,* this new lens understands the need for the cumbersome term "magico-religious" but wishes to refocus the lens.[45] *Bringing the Gods to Mind* introduces a new perspective on Vedic history, to allow for one to see the ways in which a single idea, or image, has been utilized, or imagined as useful, in different ways over time.

We return, then, to the Hail Marys and *Gītā* verses with new eyes. Different worlds of concern and associative possibilities govern the use of such contemporary Christian and Hindu "mantras." The *Gītā* verses and the Hail Marys have different effects or performative ends, depending on whether one is in a temple or by a sickbed, praying for a cure or in a churchly procession. So, too, the specific *viniyoga*s, or uses of mantra, in early India create different kinds of mental and ritual worlds. This is an important — and overlooked — interpretive principle in early India, which deserves further study.

CHAPTER 2

Poetry, Ritual, and Associational Thought in Early India

The Theories

Contiguity and resemblance is not brought about because it would be good in itself in some metaphysical heaven; it is good form because it comes into being in our experience.

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Experience*

If we were to ask the Catholic housewife and the Hindu businessman what their reasons were for their modern mantras, they would answer with some description of inner thought and outer action: in Varanasi one evening, the businessman said to me: "Whenever I think of Kṛṣṇa, or sing about Kṛṣṇa, my mind is settled." What if the Hindu businessman elevated this statement to a principle, so that the insertion of his mantra into a ritual situation, or even an everyday situation in his life, had the clear and intended effect? And what if he then wrote a manual about it? Such an everyday situation in fact existed in early India. The principle of application was called *viniyoga,* a powerful hermeneutical principle, often ignored by scholars of early India. *Viniyoga,* however, can give us new insight into the workings of ritual, society, and creativity.

METONYMY OVER MAGIC

I take a basic insight of Frazer's — that sympathetic magic works by contiguity — and give its cognitive insights new life and dignity, without the categorical confusion of the early Indologists between magic and religion, or the derogatory implications of the term *magic*. Some might argue

that one could continue to use the term magic but simply reinvigorate it with new meaning and possibility without its derogatory implications—somewhat like the political reinvention of the term *queer*. I am dubious that this semantic rejuvenation is possible at this stage of the intellectual game, especially when magic remains a popular way of speaking and writing about "bad religion." Indeed, it still remains a way of writing and speaking about early Indian practices. While I do not think it wise to jettison the term "magic" altogether, especially in its more respectful usages, I would rather *add* to the conversation the richer and potentially less judgmental terms in theories of metonymy.

THE TERMINOLOGY OF MAGIC IN INDOLOGY

Let us be more specific about the problem with the term *magic*. A number of different critiques can be invoked. Beginning with Malinowski, even modified versions of the substantialist, Frazerian definition (characterized exclusively by instrumental action, manipulative attitudes, and immediate, usually asocial or antisocial goals) have been challenged on several fronts. As part of this critique, many scholars (most notably Neusner, Tambiah, and Versnel) have made specific arguments, including: (1) that "antisocial" magic cannot be seen as an entity distinct from "social" religion on the grounds that magic can be seen as serving particularly social goals, just as religion does; (2) that, conversely, religion can possess as many asocial or antisocial aspects as magic; and (3) that, seen from a sociolinguistic point of view, the mechanisms of a spell are not terribly different from those of prayer.[1] What is more, historical case studies have shown that the term magic, and terms analogous to it, have no fixed set of referents; they have different meanings in different circumstances. Such terms are best understood functionally, as a means of social distancing by one group of practitioners from another, or as a way of talking about what "proper" religious behavior is, and what it is not.

The confused use of the term magic is especially vivid in the history of Indology—particularly in Indology's study of the use of mantra in Vedic contexts. For example, scholars have readily admitted that the *Atharva Veda* is in large part comprised of mantras from the *Ṛg* and *Sāma Veda*s; however, because of its practical nature, the *Atharva Veda* is somehow no longer truly canonical but falls instead under the heading of "lesser spells" and "charms." A. B. Keith's treatment of the *hotṛ* is another excellent early example. The *hotṛ* is the priest of the sacrifice most responsible for the recitation of mantra. Because of this function, Keith

characterizes the *hotṛ*'s role as essentially that of a magician, one that is contrasted with the *adhvaryu,* the ritualist:

> It is wholly impossible to doubt that, if the Adhvaryu really thought that the acts of the sacrifice and the actual offerings were what mattered, his view was not in the least shared by the *hotṛ,* who was of the opinion that his perfectly constructed hymns would give the god the greatest amount of pleasure. . . . The pride of the Vedic poets in their own powers is perfectly evidenced, when they claim that their hymns strengthen Indra for the slaying of Vṛtra or that through the prayers the steeds are yoked to the chariot of the god. Here as everywhere the tendency of the sacrifice to pass into magic is illustrated: the prayer which is really essentially free from magic is at last turned by the pride of its composers into nothing but a spell.[2]

The source of the "pride" here is, of course, that beautifully constructed words alone can effect the ends which the poet seeks — and this, to Keith's mind, constitutes magic and not religion — religion being defined by the "actual" sacrifice and the "actual" offerings themselves. Yet Keith's own distinction between magical action and authentically sacrificial action is only to be blurred by the title of a subsequent chapter, called "The Magical Power of Sacrifice." We are left wondering what is magic, what is religion, and where or why the line can be drawn between the two.

This example from Keith is especially apt for my purposes of analyzing verbal "charms" below; however, such examples abound in both early and relatively recent Indological works as well. Sylvain Lévi's *La Doctrine Du Sacrifice* is perhaps the best example: he characterized the Vedic sacrifice as a "magical operation," naturally accompanied by an amoral, materialistic theology.[3] The term magic itself always implies another, higher norm from which the described texts and practices fall short.

The problem is made even worse when one examines the more explicitly pragmatic, later Vedic literature, which has been characterized as a lesser class of writings. Both the Gṛhya and the Vidhāna literature are especially rich in these so-called magical operations. These texts consist in part of everyday situations and rituals, including instructions as to which mantra is appropriate in extra sacrificial situations — counteracting the effect of bad dreams or bad food, setting out on a journey, hearing a sudden sound when walking in the forest, difficulty in childbirth, jealous cowives, and so on. The Gṛhya literature is classified by Indologists as "nonsolemn," a kind of smaller and more "folk"-oriented set of practices, and the *Ṛg Vidhāna* has been viewed as "magical" by all those scholars who have worked on it — most notably Jan Gonda and M. S. Bhat.[4] As one scholar, Auguste Barth, articulates this perspective,

"besides being very ancient, [the Vidhāna literature] has no other object than to direct in the observance of a kind of cultus at a reduced rate, which should procure the same advantages as the great sacrifices."[5]

In assuming that the Vidhāna literature, as well as the Gṛhya literature leading up to it, is merely a "cultus at a reduced rate"—the magical reduction of what was once grand, public, and authentically religious—Barth cuts off any further possibilities for exploring linkages between the later "magical" literature and the earlier, less "reduced" literature. For Barth, the later literature's status as a set of "magical" texts is all we know and all we need to know, to paraphrase Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." However, there is far more to the text than the shrinkage of piety and pomp to sorcery and circumstance. The later literature contains particular intellectual operations that expand the world of the Vedic canon, and the world of the more "solemn" Śrauta literature, in intriguingly adaptive ways. This trajectory may well be one of the earlier examples of the ways in which later Indian traditions appropriate Vedic ritual while simultaneously presenting their modus operandi as simpler, and perhaps even preferable, to the earlier practices.[6] Insofar as all these scholarly works describe a Vedic world that is not rich in personal, social, and political experience, but only a world of manipulation, the term magic deprives the image of its resonance in early Vedic thought and leaves it open to romanticization as well as to formalization.

MOVING FORWARD: A PLACE FROM WHICH TO BUILD

Fortunately, two recent works provide a model for the study of image in early India on which we can build. First, in his work, *Net of Magic,* Lee Siegel examines the idea of magic in the worlds of ancient, medieval, and colonial India and traces an ancient confusion between secular and sacred magic. As Siegel puts it, the two-thousand-year tradition of the mendicant ascetics and their powers of *siddhi,* or wondrous spiritual accomplishments, should not be confused with the court or street performers who sought to imitate them. Such *siddhi*s originated not only with the mendicant but also with the contemporaneous sacrificial tradition. In addition to the expected catalog of levitation, disappearance, and shape changing, such *siddhi*s included many of the powers of mantra, including *prāpti,* the power to obtain things, or effect materializations of things, as well as *prākāmya* (the power to will things in a particular way), as well as *īśitva* (a power over the will of others).[7]

More basic to our purposes here is the recent work of Ariel Glucklich.

In his compelling book, *The End of Magic,* Glucklich locates the dynamics of magic in basic cognitive theory and theories of image schematas. First, in arguing for a different approach to magic, he argues, as I do, against Frazerian causality and for one that engages experiential meaning. As he presents one situation, the observer sees a bird take off, then hears a blast. He does not think then, as Frazer and Taylor might have suggested, that the bird caused the blast because the two events are approximate in time. Glucklich suggests that he does not think about the two events at all, *unless they are important enough for his survival to engage his interest.* When that interest is engaged, then all the actors in the scene — the bird, and the loud sound, and he — become related as parts of a larger scene of which he too is a participant. As Glucklich writes, "It is a meaningful scene, not the causal relation among discrete events, that engages the observer who will use magic on occasion."[8]

Glucklich shares this holistic approach with other cognitive theorists of religion, and it is an approach that is very helpful for thinking about images within rituals. Glucklich argues too that the specific desired goal of a rite is thought of as inherently part of the qualities and actions of a rite because the rite produces relational consciousness.[9] So, too, McCauley and Lawson, in *Rethinking Religion,* argue for a cognitive analysis of ritual, which they term a "holism with multiple models," in which semantics and meaning should be based on a middle level of object categories that seem to be cognitively fundamental.[10] As they put it, "In ritual, no less than in any other act, we have general capacities for dealing with part-whole structure in real world objects via gestalt perception, motor movement, and the formation of rich mental images. These impose a preconceptual structure on our experience." The most abstract and complex ideas can be traced to embodied experience by means of these schemas, such as linking, part-whole, containers, and so on. These schemas are based on simple experiences in space.[11]

In his book, Glucklich goes on to argue for a deepened idea of magic, which he calls "magical experience," in which certain conditions must apply, such as heightened perception; the weakening of the boundaries of "the self"; relational thinking; and a ritual program.[12] Glucklich's case studies of magic in Banaras in part 3 of his book allow us to think through these conditions in densely descriptive ways. He has, however, the richness of ethnographic terms at his disposal to help him argue for the magical experience as a psychological one.

The Vedic case is slightly different. Although there are many traces, or *vāsanā*s, of a problematic distinction between magic and religion, there are important recent moves in another direction. Two further important

studies in the Vedic field need to be mentioned here. The first is that of Michael Witzel, "Magical Thought in the Veda." His description of such thought lays very significant groundwork for a more cognitively oriented (and significantly, more respectful, as I also argue) study of the worldview of the Vedas. He writes that the principle of identification between two things, albeit temporary, is the basic and creative mode of thought in Vedic texts. Similarity of one or a few characteristics, that is, partial identity, means complete identity. This is also frequently the case for Western thinkers as well, but it goes to the heart of reality for Vedic thinkers. If this axiom of identification is accepted, Vedic argumentation becomes logical. "This axiom has the same value for the Vedic magician and thinker as an axiom 'scientific statements are true," that is, they describe reality correctly, would have for us."[13] He goes on to show how this principle of identification (called *bandhu*s by Gonda) can be a form of creative reinterpretation from myth to ritual, from ritual to myth, from myth to philosophy, and so on. Witzel follows K. Hoffman in describing these identifications as "noetic" categories—the innumerable concepts, generally known, remembered, or culturally connected with a particular word.[14] Such *noem*s are what I call metonymic associations. They are observable in both Western and Indian cultures, and they can be infinitely creative in making new forms of meaning in ritual, poetic, and philosophical texts.

Second is that of Jan Houben, who, in an elegant and close study of the *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 1.164 (the "Riddle Hymn") in the *pravargya* ritual, does a remarkable job of showing the mutual interconnectedness between the ritual acts and the words of the hymn. Every verse that is used in the famous hymn may well have had a corresponding ritual action in the *pravargya*, and even puzzling questions of the order of verses get sorted out in this exemplary study. While we will be discussing some of the details of his work later, it is important to note here that Houben's conclusions show the major significance of associational thought as a way of studying early India:

> The most important conclusion to be drawn is that the alignment of the symbolic language of the hymn and the symbolic forms of the Pravargya ritual . . . greatly advances the interpretation of both. We saw emerge a complex ritual structure . . . directed to eliciting experiences and reflections with regard to the fundamental forces of individual and cosmic life. This ritual structure functions as a "laboratory" of early speculative reflection.[15]

He goes on to note that the ritual seems to have function as a stabilizing structure, which hosted open-ended elements that invited elaboration and speculation, and also diversification. Thus, in his very specific case

study, he shows that ritual and myth, act and image, interconnect in very fruitful and open-ended ways — ways that encourage multivalence and further interpretation. My own study will provide shorter and less detailed studies of these same kinds of phenomena, traced over time. I hope that these smaller vignettes can provide an invitation to closer studies of each individual hymn such as that of Houben's.

These studies show that in Vedic texts we have very few analogous categories for magic, unlike what Siegel or Glucklich might have among magicians in Banaras or Kashmir. Rather, in the Vedic case we do have indigenous categories that translate roughly analogously with one particular intellectual operation — metonymy. In the contemporary academic world, metonymy is used in literature and philosophy as well as ritual studies; in this way it mirrors the literary, philosophical, and ritual emphases of the complex Vedic corpus.

THE FRAMEWORK OF METONYMY AND ASSOCIATIONAL THOUGHT

For all the reasons above, these Vedic intellectual operations might not be viewed exclusively as magic, but also placed in the theoretical framework of associational thought, or metonymy. The additional lens of associational thought is felicitous for a number of reasons. First, the term *viniyoga,* or application, itself suggests associational thought *within* the commentarial practice of the Vedic *śākhā*s, in that it denotes an "application," or "rule," about how to associate canonical Ṛg Vedic verses with new ritual situations.[16] As J. Z. Smith has remarked, commentary is fundamentally concerned with application, new associations between canon and elements surrounding canon. *Viniyoga* might be described, in his words, as the recurrent process of "arbitrary limitation and of overcoming limitation through ingenuity."[17] Second, the perspective of associational thought brings into focus the one-to-one relationship between text and comment on the text — in this case, the verses of the *Ṛg Veda* and the applications of those verses that all the texts of the Āśvalāyana and the Śāṅkhāyana *śākhās* prescribe. As such, the student of the different Vedic branches can bring into focus the minutiae of intellectual operations performed on Vedic canon in order for it to remain relevant and viable in changing conditions. Third, associational thoughts tend to be embedded within, and frequently refer to, larger traditions of interpretation; thus the interpreter of such practices would not only look at text and commentary (mantra and *sūtra*), but at other commentaries (antecedent and rival traditions, and so on) on

that same text. Because of intertextuality, the perspective of associational thought is historically productive; it shows — both directly and indirectly — the ways in which the composers of the Sūtras and the Vidhānas perceive social circumstances to have changed and how they create new forms of ritual application to address that change. Fourth, the lens of associational thought brings into focus the investments of the practitioner — the "applier" of mantra — who refashions and relocates the text in such a way as to maintain authority in the midst of shifting circumstances.[18] Of course, neither the lens of metonymy nor the focus on the term *viniyoga* can adequately describe all of the phenomena in what has been called the "magical" part of Vedic rituals. Rather each is a helpful supplement to our present lexicon.

METONYMY: CLOSER DEFINITIONS

What is metonymy, aside from the broad term I have already hinted at — associative thought based on contiguity? Raymond Gibbs gives Balzac's use of image as a wonderful literary example of a concrete object or person that stands in for or represents larger objects or domains of experience. Consider his opening of the novel *Pere Goriot:*

> Madame Vauquer is at home in its stuffy air, she can breathe without being sickened by it. Her face, fresh with the chill freshness of the first frosty autumn day, her wrinkled eyes, her expression, varying from the conventional set smile of the ballet dancer to the sour frown of the discounter of bills, her whole person, in short, provides a clue to the boarding house, just as the boarding house implies the existence of such a person as she is.

Balzac shows us something about the boarding house from her face, and the boarding house in turn implies something about the person she is.[19] Each element is associated with something else nearby it and shares a feature. The person and the boarding house are in the same conceptual domain and share the same features of stuffiness and convention.

The differences between metonymy and metaphor are crucial to this discussion. Scholars have disagreed with each other, and still do, about the relationship between the two — whether metonymy is a subset of metaphor, whether they are diametrically opposed, and so on. Many agree, however, that the two can be distinguished in terms of how they make connections between things: in metaphor two elements from different conceptual domains are related. In metonymy, two elements from the *same* conceptual domain are related.

To take an everyday example, in the sentence, "The creampuff was knocked out in the boxing match" the term creampuff *metaphorically* refers to the boxer because he is soft and easy to defeat, but the human boxer and the creampuff come from two different domains. Metonymy, by contrast, deals with concepts from the same domain: "We need a new glove to play third base." A new glove refers to a person who would play third base in a baseball game. Unlike the boxer, who is "like" the creampuff, the third baseman is not "like" the glove. The glove that he wears becomes the signifier of his role. Thus unlike the creampuff example, where the relationship of two elements is set up through similarity between different domains, the metonymic relationship of the two different elements is set up by contiguity within the same conceptual domain. Relatedly, a common subset of metonymy is synecdoche, substitution of a part for the whole.

Roman Jakobson proposed a theory that distinguishes metaphor and metonymy along similar lines. After testing aphasic patients, he argued that any linguistic sign can be combined with other linguistic signs or be substituted by others. In one kind of aphasia, there is a loss of semantic knowledge, and speakers find something contiguous to it in order to gain back meaning — that is, they created metonymies. Others retain the ability to give synonyms for the words they could not find and thus looked instead for paradigms that were similar to the words they had forgotten — that is they created metaphors.[20]

SOME PROPERTIES OF METONYMY

Framing

While the debate about Jakobson's definitions has become much more complex, the larger issue in terms of Vedic thinking is that metonymy is a form of conceptual contiguity, and that these contiguities occur within a larger framework from which the composer, reader, and reciter draw.[21] This larger "frame" is usually a cultural one; the content and shape of the frame depends on our everyday experience and world-knowledge. Beings, things, processes, and actions that generally or ideally occur together are represented in the mind as a frame.[22] That is partly why metonyms are hard to translate across cultures, because our frames of reference, that "extralinguistic knowledge" that gives our linguistic knowledge specificity, are so different. For example, the frame "breakfast" for a Southern Baptist might include "toast, butter, ham,

eggs, milk, and coffee," whereas it would be different for an observant Jew in Brooklyn Heights who does not eat ham, and yet again for a brahmin in South Indian who eats spicy vegetables and *masala dosa* for breakfast.

Merleau-Ponty articulates the inherent existence of framing in human experience in his *Phenomenology of Perception*.[23] In the chapter, "Association and the Projection of Memories," Merleau-Ponty argues with both associationists and psychologists and asserts that the law of association in its own right cannot be an operative fact of perception without a larger perception of a whole that precedes the perception of similarity. As he writes, "There are not arbitrary data which set about combining into a thing because de facto proximities or likenesses cause them to associate; it is, on the contrary, because we perceive a grouping as a thing that the analytical attitude can then discern likenesses or proximities. This does not simply mean that without any perception of the whole we would not think of *noticing* the resemblance or the contiguity of its elements, but literally that they would not be part of the same world and would not exist at all." The world that is perceived therefore precedes all associative thought, or in Merleau-Ponty's words, "Contiguity and resemblance is not brought about because it would be good in itself in some metaphysical heaven; it is good form because it comes into being in our experience."[24] That is to say, the form or shape of resemblance is something that resonates with bodily experience.

In short, the rules of association are governed by a frame — our perception and experience of what constitutes a world. Part of that world is a fact of identification (similarity) with other elements in that world through a set of patterns and conceptions. Thus a study of mental associations in early India must always carry with it an understanding of indigenous social principles and ideas and the dynamic relationship between them. The mental associations and the world of action they posit are so integrally connected that when one of them shifts, so too the pattern of interaction between them shifts accordingly. To return to the everyday example above: a child visiting South India for the first time, stayed in a seaside hotel, ate *masala dosa* and *sambhar* for breakfast. He commented, "We ate lunch for breakfast everyday in Madras! But only by the beach." His way of coping with the new breakfast was to switch the frame, so that the world of breakfast included the world of lunch. But this new world was also defined by his association with his hotel by the sea, and to no other place; the world of lunch-for-breakfast was in strict contiguity with the place in which he consumed it.

Linguistic Pragmatism

This idea of frame, and frames that become activated in any given metonymy, have a "pragmatic" function — that is, they are defined by usage and not by concept. This well-known idea of linguistic pragmatism explains why literal language is not the prevailing language for communication. In the example above, one might say "the third baseman" instead of the "glove," but the point of the communication is that someone good with a glove, at catching and throwing, is optimally needed. Thus Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's "principle of relevance": "Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance."[25] One might say a communication is optimally relevant if it produces maximal contextual effects with a minimum of processing effort." Panther and Radden give an example of this through a conversation between two nurses: "It's time for my gallbladder's medication" versus "It's time for Randolph's medication."[26] For the particular pragmatic context of the medical staff, the gallbladder is the most efficient way of identifying a patient — not by his name, his education, his looks, and so on. (The nurses would not have been communicating efficiently if they had said, "It's time for the PhD in economics who lives on Spruce Lane's medication.") Outside the hospital context, of course, this form of communication is neither efficient nor appropriate — but it is intensely efficient and appropriate within that context.

Referentiality

Related to "this maximal efficiency" in context, metonyms are also referential, and many linguists would prefer to study them solely by virtue of their referential capacities. As linguist Beatrice Warren puts it, the two elements of a metonym tend to refer to each other, because they are based on relations that presuppose actual coincidence.

There are several kinds of referential metonymies. Such formulations involve two expressions, one of which is the modifier and the other the head and referring item. And there is clearly an implicit link between the two; indeed, at times, the head item is only implied. Let us take one simple example: "The silver is in the drawer" is a common metonym: in fact "silver" means "that cutlery which consists of silver" is in the drawer. The implicit head and referring item is "the cutlery which" and the link (the trigger or modifier) is "silver." In English and Sanskrit, we also see explicit noun-noun compounds in which one noun is equated with the other, such as in the poetic phrase, *sāgara mekhalā*, "ocean-girdle" or

"an ocean which acts as a girdle." A referential metonym can also mean possession. "It is time for the ballbladder's medication" does not mean the gallbladder itself, but means "the man who possesses the gallbladder ailment." Thus referential metonymy is a kind of abbreviation having potentials as a naming and/or rhetorical device, which focuses on one particular quality of a thing, rather than any other kind of quality.[27] Metonyms are rampant in the nominal compounds we find in Sanskrit grammar in general, and particularly in Vedic ritual, specifically in epithets for deities but in many other instances as well.

Metonymy as Prototype

The question of selectivity in referential metonymies is related to our understanding of metonymy as "a kind of mental mapping whereby we conceive of an entire person, object, or event by understanding a salient part of a person, object or event."[28] This question of the salient part (that is, the salient part of Randolph is his gallbladder) is relevant to our purposes, for it raises the issue of the "prototype effect." In 1987, cognitive theorists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson conducted some experimental research that demonstrated that certain members of categories tend to be more representative of those categories than other members. For example, they found that the subcategory "robin" is more representative of category "bird" than chickens, ostriches, or penguins. The subcategory "desk chair" is more representative of the category "chair" than are beanbag chairs, barber chairs, or electric chairs.[29] "Housewife mothers" are more representative of the category mother than any other kind of mother. Thus the salient subcategory actually reveals a basic structure of social thought: "working mother," "adoptive mother," and so on cannot stand in for the whole category of "mother," whereas "housewife mother" can. "Working mother" and "adoptive mother" deviate from the prototypical "housewife mother" stereotype.

Prototypical metonymic thinking has a great deal of social consequences. As is obvious in the case of "mother" above, there are clearly principles behind the selectivity of associational thought, so that one subcategory becomes more prototypical than another. Vedic ritual ideas are also thus selectively constructed. It is in fact this selectivity that has led literary theorist Wai Chee Dimock to call metonymy that form of literary composition most open to social manipulation. To take her example of early twentieth-century London, and the propaganda of Britain at the time, the strength, robustness, and good cheer of the working-class woman is used to represent the entirety of British society.[30] However, to

choose those qualities of the working-class woman is to tell only a small part of her story; her use and abuse in the vicissitudes of everyday working life are not represented, nor is the system in which she must operate. The power, as well as the problem, of prototypical metonymic thinking is that it is, fundamentally, a partial truth that can, through its intensity and repeated use, become representative of the whole truth.

IDENTIFICATION

This kind of selectivity can also create an identification between the agent and the act, or the agent and the instrument of the act.[31] In thinking about this phenomenon, one linguist, Brigitte Nerlich, began observing her son construct what she called "creative metonymies." She writes:

> Matthew started school in January. At first we thought he might eat the school dinners. But he didn't like them and insisted on bringing his own lunch box like most of his friends do. So in the end we relented and, walking to school in the morning, he brandished his lunch box saying to everybody he met: "I love being a lunch box." Then he thought a bit and said "I love being a sandwich, I really like being a sandwich." — One could really see the metonymical chain extend from his arm through the lunch box to the sandwich and back. What he meant by this metonymical utterance is that he liked to be part of the children who were allowed to bring a lunch box (i.e., a sandwich) to school and were not forced to have this horrible stuff like potatoes and veg served at the school dinner.[32]

There is a kind of identification between the actor and the instrument that creates that particular pragmatic reality — in this case, the boy and his sandwich.

Even early on, Jakobson also observed that this kind of identification between actor and object works in realist fiction. As in the example of Balzac's *Pere Goriot*, the author follows contiguous relationships, metonymically digressing from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time.[33] The metonyms thus belong both to description and narration — contiguity of things and people plus contiguity of events. In fiction, objects can serve as elements of description and motivators of narrative action. The device that Toni Morrison uses in *Song of Solomon* is an earring: jewelry is seen in many cultures as a metonymic means to identify a person. It is also associated with social and personal identity and power and status. It is a means of identifying the whole by an outward part.[34]

But there is even more to the role of metonymy in realist narrative.

Michael Rifaterre has argued that it is repetition and embeddedness that make the metonym effective.[35] There must be a prolonged sequence, dispersed throughout the narrative and weaving in and out of it, forming part of the referential frame of the text. The earring in *Song of Solomon,* for example, is a metonym that is constantly recontextualized; repetition thus allows it to move from its immediate context to the whole textual structure. As Langaker has argued, the fictional world acts as the kind of frame that must have its own consistency or truth, understood by the assumed reader in terms of a real experienced world and a rich personal encyclopedia of knowledge and beliefs.[36]

Metonymy and Ritual: Performance Studies

This use of metonym in fiction is also the same in ritual—in fact, one might say the very definition of ritual. All the properties explored above are keenly present in ritual. Here, performance studies can contribute a great deal to our understanding of this phenomenon, building as it does on the essential interaction between text and context, interpretation and the creativity of individual performers.

First, ritual involves a highly specific, contextualized world, or "frame"—as much, or even more, than the gallbladder ward in the hospital. This framing is what Dennis Tedlock and many other performance theorists are trying to get at when they speak of an oral poetics—the fullness of context in which every ritual is carried out.[37] For Tedlock, ritual "is not the imperfect realization of a playwright's lofty intentions by lowly actors, nor is it an incomplete obedience to the rules set forth in an imaginary mental handbook of the poetic art. Instead, performance is constitutive of verbal art" in which the actors use every part of their context to create effective performances.[38] Ritual is its own frame or world, with a wealth of possible and actual metonymies present at any given moment. As Charles Briggs puts it, "The emergence of contextual and performance based studies is crucial, since they point to the status of contextual elements as central elements of the performance, not just the external conditions."[39]

Performance studies has suggested that in ritual situations metonymic expression is more the norm than nonmetonymic expression, because of its highly contextualized nature. It is a created world governed by roles and instruments; therefore, the higher likelihood of actors to use pragmatic forms of communication, and metonymically to refer to and to identify with those roles and instruments. While others (Tedlock, Gill, Laderman, Driver, Mudimbe, Spiziri, and Grimes) have examined the

religious aspects of performance in contexts similar to the highly structured world of early Indian ritual, Charles Briggs's work on the Easter liturgy in a Mexican/Texan town comes closest to the kind of analysis attempted here.[40] Briggs makes a study of the set texts of hymns and prayers in the Easter liturgy and their relationship to the actors' liturgical gestures and movements during Holy Week; as an interpretation of a "formal" performative context the liturgy is analogous to our mantras in their ritual directions in the Śrauta and Gṛhya texts.

While space does not permit an intensely detailed analysis, it is worth pausing to show how Briggs's treatment of this Easter liturgy shows all the metonymic properties outlined above. First, he outlines the kind of pragmatic selectivity present in the Holy Week performance, whereby participants select "elements of ongoing linguistic social, cultural, political, historical, and natural environment and to accord them a meaning and role within the performance."[41] Thus the rigidly set texts of Holy Week are modified creatively by all these selected elements in metonymic association.

Second, Briggs argues that the "referential content" of the texts and holy images focus the worshipers' attention of the events of Holy Week and their transformative properties. He notes that there is a kind of mutual referentiality between the images of the Holy Week liturgy and the words of the liturgy. Because the words of the liturgy are said to have been handed down from Christ, there is a kind of eternal quality to them. Thus when the words refer to the images (those painted by the liturgical actors on the church walls, those created by the actors in costumed procession), they are also confirming the images' eternal status. The images then refer back and confirm the words.[42]

So, too, Briggs argues that the words of Holy Week liturgies effect an identification between the actors and their referents — the characters in the Passion of Christ. As such, the words are transformative in nature and their meaning matters. He writes, "The mere locution of a particular set of illocutionary formulae is seen as utterly useless. To be successful in achieving symbolic unification with Christ and the Virgin, a worshiper must be fully engaged, physically, cognitively and emotionally in the rituals."[43]

Relatedly, there is also a "prototypical effect" in which certain characters are a better example of the category "human" than others. The crucial element is that the worshiper experience his own words, actions, and emotions as "matching" Christ and the Virgin to such an extent that unification is achieved. Thus the Virgin and Christ are the prototypes of human, and the worshiper's task is to place him- or herself in metonymic juxtaposition with them, to "match" them.

While Briggs gives us an exhaustive account of the relationship between a fixed-text ritual and its context, we can also work with more mundane examples. Let's take two familiar statements from Jewish and Christian ritual: in a Jewish synagogue, from the rabbi to the congregation: "Would the Bar Mitzvah please come to the podium?"; and in an Anglo-Catholic church, from one worshiper to another, "The crucifix is slow today!" These two statements contain all of the metonymic properties that were discussed in Briggs's treatment. First, both are highly pragmatic forms of conversation. One doesn't need other information about the person having the Bar Mitzvah (he's nervous; he lives nearby) or the crucifix (he's late; he overslept) to communicate the basic purpose. So, too, both statements involve mutual referentiality: the person carrying the crucifix and the moving crucifix imply each other; the Bar Mitzvah is the person who has the Bar Mitzvah. Relatedly, it should be clear that these two metonyms also involve identification of the actor with the instrument of causation; the Bar Mitzvah must identify with the Bar Mitzvah process or else he wouldn't get through the ceremony. So, too, the crucifix must identify with his role or he wouldn't be able to get through the procession. Finally, the prototype effect is also in force: the crucifix is the best example of Christian worshiper that day; the Bar Mitzvah is the best example of a mensch that day. (Bar Mitzvah, of course, originally referred to the person and then to the ceremony, so there is a double metonymy at work here in both directions.)

These everyday examples reveal that it is not so far, linguistically speaking, from "Mommy, I love being a sandwich" to the Eucharist's "I am the bread of life," or "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you." And, to take the somewhat humorous and blasphemous comparison one step further, repetition is key to ritual as well as to metonymic effectiveness in fiction. The metonymic construction of person and bread was and is repeated several times throughout the Christian liturgy (perhaps more intentionally than Matthew repeated his lunchbox/sandwich metonym). Its effectiveness in ritual is therefore somewhat similar to that of the earring in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon:* it becomes its own subtext, its own set of referential meanings.

VEDIC RITUAL METONYMY

Given the sense of metonym in ritual explained above, how are Vedic ideas constructed by metonym, by virtue of being ritually associated with canon — linked with sacred words through their actions? Comparison

through contiguity is perhaps one of the basic modes of thought in Vedic ritual, particularly in the Sūtra and Vidhāna material discussed here.

Vedic ritual is similar to other rituals, in that it is the manipulation of sacrificial objects, texts, and persons. These manipulations in their own right can be read as myriad metonyms — ways in which "the concrete object or person stands in for or represents larger objects or domains of experience." This does not mean that every ritual movement is "symbolic of" something; rather, the concrete object or actor connects with a domain of associations or worlds known to the ritual actors.

Let's take a concrete example from a documentary film about a Vedic ritual: Frits Staal's *Agnicayana,* used in classrooms all over America, Europe, and India.[44] At one point, in the proceedings, the filmmaker asks one of the priests why a particular mantra about being reborn is being recited: the priest says that in sacrificing, the sacrificer is undergoing a rebirth and is using the language of Indra in the mantra to "stand in" for that rebirth. In one metonymic theorist's view, "Mary is Cinderella in the play" is a metonym that implies that "Mary is playing the role of Cinderella" in the play. So, too, the sacrificer is "standing in" for Indra and the entire set of associations with Indra at the moment of recitation of mantra. (I will refrain from doing more than simply remarking on the irony that this lovely interpretive statement by a brahmin actor in the ritual comes in the middle of a film made by a scholar who has argued that brahmin ritual actors do not semantically interpret their ritual, nor do they find meaning in them.) In this ritual actor's own interpretation, it is clear that there is a mutual reference between actor and word: the mantra to Indra describes the act of being reborn, and so too does the ritual act of the person.

We find metonymic thought — association through contiguity and context — the basis for the composition of Sūtras themselves — both Śrauta and Gṛhya. As Gonda rather wryly remarks, the Śrauta texts deal with the intricate and elaborate ritual sacrifices in a concise language that, while vigorous in brevity and exactness, leaves much to be tacitly understood. In our Āśvalāyana school, for instance, there is a complex technique of recitation called the *hautra mantra,* which involves many multileveled rules that are in fact only implied by ritual context.

Moreover, the specific qualities of metonymic thinking (framing, pragmatism, referentiality, identification, and prototype) are also prevalent in colorful ways in Vedic ritual. First, the frame of Vedic ritual is all important, as it is in metonymic thinking. Frits Staal has written eloquently of ritual procedures that become the "frames" or "embed" other rituals.

This mode allows for an elaborate set of possibilities for ritual substitution. Such is also the case with mantra usage. In Staal's view, one can trace this embeddedness from prototype to ectype with almost mathematical precision. Thus when the Soma sacrifice is the frame for one particular offering, or *iṣṭi,* it creates a whole different set of metonymic associations for that offering than when the *aśvamedha,* or horse sacrifice, is the frame of that offering.

We can deduce the role of the frame in Vedic ritual by virtue of the fact that in many different Śrauta manuals, the actor—literally, the subject of the sentence—is entirely omitted. For example, *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.2.7 simply reads, "He undertakes the vow; he sets out [to gather] a twig." "He" in the first sentence means the sacrificer, but "he" in the second sentence means the *adhvaryu*—a completely different person in the ritual. One would only know this fact from an assumed ritual frame. The power of context can also be seen in the frequent omission of the names of deities. To take another example from our Āśvalāyana *śākhā* (2.1.22), the manual states: "Everywhere on the arrival of a deity there is absence [of the names] of the regular [gods, mentioned in the model sacrifices]." That is to say, the model sacrifices provide the prototype and therefore supply the context in which the names of deities are to be remembered.

Second, ritual pragmatism is prevalent in elegant Vedic economies of expression in the Sūtras. In fact, numerous ritual expressions not only show familiarity with various techniques but also complicated processes with great precision by means of technical terms.[45] One ritual text (*BŚS* 3.5.73,10) simply says, with one verb, *abhidyotayati,* which means, "He illuminates the offering by means of an ignited blade of straw." The shortened language indicates an assumed set of ritual actions. Here again, compare the contemporary metonymic response to the question, "How did you get here?": "I hailed a taxi." The simple verb "hail" means "to stop," but in the metonymic use of the term, it means: "to stop, to get in, to give the cab driver directions, and to drive to the destination."[46] We are often unaware of how many complex actions are implied and assumed by the use of a single verb, which in its simplest meaning, has a single referent.

Third, referential qualities of metonyms are also basic to the structure of Vedic rituals. Remember that metonyms came to resemble noun-noun compounds in which the two elements refer to each other; thus the silver-spoon example above. As is well known, this is a basic linguistic concept in the construction of compounds even in early Sanskrit: the *bahuvrīhi.*

Bahuvrīhi means "much rice," but it mostly means "the man who possesses much rice." And when the reader is parsing compounds, she proceeds exactly the way in which a linguist would analyze "she is a redhead" as "she is a person who possesses a head of red hair." And of course, the analysis may become very complicated, involving very different grammatical relationships between elements within a single compound, but still remains a *bahuvrīhi,* or a referential metonym implying possession.

There is an unwavering commitment to such constructs in Vedic ritual. Take, for example, the epithets for deities used in almost any mantra. These referential metonyms (a type called "*bahuvrīhi*" compounds) usually connote the essential activity and attributes of any given deity. To take some colorful examples: the title Jātavedas is not just "knowledge of creatures," but rather "that being who has knowledge of creatures," and the term is usually applied to Agni, the deity of fire. The term *mahāyoni* means not just "great vagina," but "one who has been produced by copulation." So, too, the *mahāvrata* ritual, the term for the winter equinox festival, is rich with metonymic meanings. *Mahāvrata* signifies a "great vow" in its simplest lexical meaning, but it also means a particular verse — one recited at the end of the *gavāmayana* ceremony — a yearlong ceremony that follows the rays of the sun. *Mahāvrata* also can, in a metonymic spree, also mean the *gavāmayana* day itself of the *mahāvrata* ritual, or any of its ceremonies, or any of its ritual rules. We can also see this referential metonym in the names of ritual objects. In a more political vein, *gataśrī* has as its literal meaning "going glory," but it also can mean one who has obtained glory or wealth, or one who is a victorious king, a learned brahmin, or a *vaiśya* who is the leading figure of his village (*KŚS* 4.13.5; *ŚB* 1.3.5.12).

There are myriad examples of such referential metonyms; the fifth-century BCE etymological dictionary, the *Nirukta,* could be said to be made up entirely of such metonyms. As the famous later text, *The Laws of Manu,* states, "No sacrificial rite can be performed without an etymologist."[47] Thus we can infer the centrality of referential metonyms.

Fourth, the central concept of prototype is one of the main properties of Vedic ritual metonym. Again, as Staal and many others have observed, this is a crucial organizing principle to the Vedic ritual texts. The contents of most of the Śrauta Sūtras are arranged systematically, with "prototypes" *(prakṛti)* of the sacrificial ceremonies being described first. They are followed by topics or ectypes *(vikṛti)* that require separate treatment but can still occur in a condensed form, because they follow

the basic pattern of the prototypes.[48] Thus one can see that Lakoff's idea of prototype — that some members of a category are more representative than others — definitely applies here. The basic *agniṣṭoma* rituals, for instance, are the prototypes and members of the category of Soma sacrifice that are most representative of that category. This mode of thought was an explicit organizing principle for the entire corpus of the ritual Sūtras.

In another example, again in the Āśvalāyana school, there are formulaic expressions to inform the student that the preceding rite is a prototype: *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 2.1.1 states the rule, *paurṇamāseneṣṭipaṣusomā upadiṣṭā* — "by the sacrifice of the full moon the *iṣṭi*s, animal and Soma sacrifices are taught." According to our text, the full-moon sacrifice is the prototype, and the other sacrifices are the variants.

We also see prototypes of the deities themselves in recitation of mantras referring to the deities themselves. A sacrificer says, "I lift this grass with the arms of Indra," or in the example above of the Staal film, *Agnicayana,* the sacrificer is "standing in" for Indra in reciting the mantra about rebirth. This act is a metonymic reference to a prototype: the category of Indra is the most representative of all those who are reborn, of all those who lift purifying *darbha* grass. One is reminded of the movie *Castaway,* where the central character stands by his newly built fire on the deserted island and shouts, beating his breast, "Fire! I have built FIRE!" There, by his actions and his tone of voice, he is metonymically extending himself to the prototypical "first man" who discovered fire.

Finally, the ritual literature is also filled with the kind of efficacious repetition that makes a successful use of metonym in literature. Although the contemporary reader may not find in the Sūtra literature an image with the same compelling force as Pilate's earring in Morrison's *Song of Solomon,* the very embeddedness of ritual procedures and ritual mantras require a high degree of repetition. As a means of instruction to the sacrificer, this constant repetition is one way of helping him to become familiar with the material. In my observations of contemporary Vedic sacrifices, I would often notice laughter at the moments when the Śrauta Sūtras were consulted, only to be told that a particular procedure had "already been explained *[vyākhyātam]*." The Śrauta Sūtras are filled with the abbreviations that indicate cross-referencing, precisely in order to finesse repetition. The *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* cautions the ritualists that a repetition is coming with the term *uktam* — as in *uktam agnipraṇayanam,* "the bringing forth of the fire has already been mentioned," or *siddham*

iṣṭi saṃtiṣṭhate, "the sacrifice is completed in the established way." In fact, we might argue that, unlike Pilate's earring, these explicit references to repetition make the metonyms quite obvious. But the Vedic ritual repetitions do, in fact, carry with them a whole set of assumptions about the world every time they are used. My favorite, *śeṣam pūrvavat,* "the rest is as before." I saw the powerful metonymic properties of this phrase in the howls of frustrated laughter in contemporary Vedic revivals when someone encountered *"śeṣam pūrvavat"* and realized that this meant an entire complex ritual procedure had to be repeated.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the Indian businessman and the Catholic housewife would say they were up to something other than simply "magic" in their utterance of mantras. In a similar way, the exclusive use of the term magic can lead us conceptually astray in many ways in our thinking about early Indian ritual. In many of its various properties (pragmatism, referentiality, identification, and prototypical thinking), the Vedic ritual world shares a great deal with metonymic thinking. In effect, with the use of the lens of metonymy, a model of magic in early India might be modified by a model of performance, whereby ritual actors make imaginative linkages between poetic image and gesture. Vedic texts show different uses of resemblance for different exegetical purposes. Viewed as a set of hermeneutical acts, the intellectual operations of *viniyoga* thus become of interest in their own right, not simply as instances of magical thought.

There is one danger here in the use of the term "metonymy." It could become too *mental* in its emphasis, and not grounded enough in the material and sometimes frankly instrumental world. (This is a common critique of cognitive theory in general.) Let us always keep the physical world in mind. As the brahmins of the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna texts seemed to know quite well, making resemblances between mantras and their environment, canon and context, also involves making claims about the nature, function, and privilege of canonical texts, their authors, and their physical worlds. In performing this study it is my hope that such micrological concerns can be of some use to historians of Vedic religion, as well as the basis on which to theorize about the dynamics of other ritual and poetic traditions that may have analogous forms of imagistic trajectories. But before we even begin to think about those larger concerns, we must take a further, more technical step into the world of *viniyoga* itself.

CHAPTER 3

Viniyoga

The Recovery of a Hermeneutic Principle

The application is more important.

Bṛhaddevatā 5.94

A discussion of Vedic ritual metonymy leads to a special form of associative thought—a particular form of mantric interpretation called *viniyoga*. *Viniyoga* is a kind of application of Vedic mantra through the creations of new sets of associations in new ritual situations and is a special form of a hermeneutic principle that involves metonymy. It also involves two assumptions: (1) that mantras have some semantic content, even if it is only in terms of a single word association; and (2) that some imaginative world is built in juxtaposing, or metonymically linking, ritual poetic word and ritual action. To put it in terms of our earlier examples, the Hail Marys, no matter how rote, typically seem to involve some image of Mary, no matter how faint. The *Gītā bhajan,* no matter how exhausted, would involve some trace of Kṛṣṇa, no matter how rote. And the brahmin in the film *Agnicayana* is clearly using the mental images of rebirth suggested by the mantra to describe the link between word and action. The brahmin is, in effect, describing the principle behind the *viniyoga* or application of that particular mantra in that ritual situation.

VINIYOGA AND THE SEMANTIC CONTENT OF MANTRA

But how do we know mantras mean anything at all when it comes to dispelling fear, for example? Aren't they just sounds, despite some residual meaning in the words, as many Indologists have implied? A further, if brief, review of mantra's usage in early India might be useful here. The

Ṛg Vedic mantra is usually a single verse dedicated to a particular deity, with a particular purpose in mind — agricultural prosperity, long life, material wealth, sons, and the like. During the early and middle Vedic periods (ca. 1500–900 BCE and ca. 900–400 BCE, respectively), mantras were used both in the context of public, sacrificial (Śrauta) rituals and in domestic, household (Gṛhya) rituals.

Many scholars have engaged the issue of mantra as speech act: generally defined as an utterance that is not simply a statement of fact, but a *doing* of something, a purposeful act. As is by now well known, mantras are helpfully described through the linguistic categories of John Searle, who, in a sophisticated expansion of Austin's linguistic taxonomy, distinguishes between several types: (1) assertives, whose function is to commit the speaker to the truth of an expressed proposition; (2) directives, which aim at getting the hearer to do something; (3) commissives, whose point is to commit the speaker to some future course of action; (4) expressives, which express some psychological attitude toward the proposition; and (5) declarations, whose function is to bring about the state of affairs indicated in the proposition by the mere fact of their being said. The utterances in this fifth category — declarations — create a reality as they are being spoken.[1] (Such a reality, of course, also depends on the situation of the hearers as well as the speakers.) While it is unnecessary for the purposes of this chapter to delve too deeply into the much-discussed details of speech-act theory, my larger point is that, in the description of the mechanics of mantra, these ideas have been extraordinarily influential.[2]

In sum, Ṛg Vedic mantras are oral utterances restricted to the brahmin class, which learns them in an elaborately ritualized period of study. In part because of their restricted nature, Ṛg Vedic mantras are also fixed, and their power as speech acts derives from this fixity. The power of these oral texts is harnessed in different ways in various forms of Vedic ritual. In the Brāhmaṇas, mantras are invoked to explain philosophically the nature of the Vedic sacrifice. In the Śrauta, or public rites, mantras tend to be used in order to augment or describe a sacrificial action. In the *gṛhya,* or domestic, rites, mantras tend to augment or describe the state of the householder who is performing a domestic sacrifice, and they become in their own right verbal substitutes for the materials of the sacrifice, such as milk, butter, and so forth. Both Gṛhya and Śrauta Sūtras tell the sacrificer which Vedic mantra to use in the performance of these rites. In both cases there is an elaborate system of correspondences at work, whereby a primarily oral text, the Ṛg Vedic mantra, is linked to other primarily oral

texts, the Brāhmaṇas, the Śrauta and the Gṛhya Sūtras, which in turn relates to the world of actual performance. Moreover, as they are used in sacrifice, they presume special classes of listeners — both the priests who must be invoked into service by other priests uttering mantras, as well as the deities who are presumed to be listening.

Most importantly for our purposes, all this "embeddedness" of oral texts is also based on a system of resemblances (another large topic in Vedic studies), whereby what is described in the mantra resembles in some important way the action prescribed and the action physically taking place.[3] Thus even the single unit of mantra itself acts as a kind of commentary on the physical procedures of the sacrifice.

So far, so good. Yet we need to clear up one particularly thorny problem. How do we know that the utterer of the mantra paid any attention to the meaning of the mantra? In the past few decades we have been overwhelmed with arguments that meaning is at most absent and at best secondary. It is worth briefly reviewing the arguments, mainly argued by Frits Staal: (1) that mantras are best viewed as a type of sound; (2) that this sound is a temporal structure that can be viewed as a biological component of human behavior; (3) that ritual behavior, too, shares this basic biological structure that mantra as sound possesses; (4) that the meaning of both mantra and ritual lies in its "syntax" and in its ability to create repetitious, transportable patterns; and (5) that semantic, "referential," poetic, or aesthetic properties of both mantra and ritual are secondary, if at all relevant, to this basic biological universal.

Many rejoinders have been made to this argument, from the basic arguments of Hans Penner to the more recent work of Glucklich and Lawson and McCauley. Many, such as Penner, have amassed cases for the referential capacity of mantra and ritual. Others, such as Glucklich, make the straightforward, and I think correct, assessment of Staal, which is that he is partially, but not universally, right.[4] There are many biological elements in mantras and in ritual performance, and Glucklich makes the insightful observation that such elements also actually agree with many indigenous interpretations of what such activities are all about!

Lawson and McCauley make the best case for semantic properties of mantra and ritual on the basis of Staal's own assumptions about cognitive universals.[5] Their brief discussion of the *agnyādhāna* and the *darśapūrṇamāsa* rite (following Eggeling's translation in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*) prompt them to argue (1) that the Vedic system contains many collateral conceptual activities that involve semantics; (2) that the

tradition of commentaries on these rites offers evidence for the relative stability of that conceptual accompaniment; (3) that there is therefore a case for the intuition that semantic content plays a role in conceptual scenarios; and (4) that even if ritualized behavior has biological roots, it does not follow that vestigial or adaptive behaviors such as rituals have no meaning. As they point out, many linguists are convinced that language is biologically based, and they happily develop theories of meaning and semantics.[6]

We might go even further and place this understanding of mantra and ritual action within Lawson and McCauley's more recent theory in the cognitive study of religion. In their book, *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms,* Lawson and McCauley makes the distinction between a religious ritual and religious action.[7] Religious rituals require both a special agent and a special patient — both of which effect change. Religious action involves agents doing something, whereas religious ritual involves agents doing something *to* something — that is, acting on patients. A change in religious status occurs. Moreover, they note that religious efficacy in ritual depends on a chain of events and qualities that have occurred before the ritual takes place — that is, that a Roman Catholic priest or Buddhist monk has been ordained as such, or in the most minimal Vedic case, that a participant in *yajña* is a twice-born.[8]

While McCauley and Lawson argue that the state of mind of the ritual participant may vary, and may well be immaterial to the efficacy of the ritual (Paul may not be paying attention while he is being baptized, and the *yajamāna* may be reading the Marathi newspaper over coffee as the *agniṣṭoma* is being performed, but the ritual effects remain the same). Nonetheless, the authors go on to argue that emotional engagement *does* matter in the survival and transmission of a ritual system, and that the actors' conceptual control over the systems' special agents (in the Vedic case, the gods) is also a crucial factor in a system's survival. As they put it, "The conceptual schemes of the particular religious system will, of course, designate which qualities and properties matter."[9] In one conceptual schema it might be necessary for the participants to be males, in another that they had fasted for a particular time and continue to behave in the proper way (see *ĀŚS* 1.1, for instance). Moreover, the cognitive representation of a religious ritual will include the formal features that determine participants' judgments about that ritual's status, efficacy, and relationship to other ritual acts. Thus in our Vedic case, it is important to know the appropriate ritual history of the water used, the fire kindles,

the pedigree of the assistant priest to the *hotṛ*, and so on. This is also the case with the ritual instruments that require specification, such as milk for the *pravargya* rite that has been boiled in the appropriate vessel, and not any other.

How does this help us understand the role of mantra? The cognitive frame shows that in the Vedic case, the mantras allow for the complete representation of a ritual — a cognitively full and emotionally engaged account of its special agents, special patients, special actions, special instruments, and why they are special. To be even more specific: mantras act as specifications of all these elements. They give the history and character of the ritual element or action that connects it to the gods and conversely why the gods must be the connection to the ritual action in the first place. As McCauley and Lawson put it, "A complete representation of a ritual is a representation of an agent with the requisite qualities acting upon an object with the requisite qualities potentially using an instrument with the requisite qualities."[10] Mantra is a reminder of those qualities that connect these elements together. Ultimately, this kind of Vedic description provides for balance between special agents and special patients — or the gods and the ritual actors. This balance is also one of the key factors in any ritual tradition's survival.

While it is not our purpose here to delve more deeply into cognitive theory, we can nevertheless make the argument from another angle. It is possible to argue from the Vedic texts themselves, and the texts alone, that the extreme view of this argument is simply unsupportable. The more moderate view — that in the interpretation of mantra sound matters as much as content — is of course quite supportable. An alternate view that I develop here would *include* the semantic content of mantra as one crucial element in the Vedic worldview itself.

This view is supported and inspired by a reading of the terms that the Vedic texts themselves use to speak of mantra usage in ritual. The most central term is, of course, the term *viniyoga,* "application." The term is used in numerous ritual texts to refer to the use of a mantra in a ritual setting. The *Nirukta* 1.8 refers to *viniyoga* as a kind of distribution of the action of those who sacrifice regularly, or priests *(viniyoga ṛtvikkarmanām).* Relatedly, and more importantly, however, in many other places in Vedic and classical literature it means application or usage of verses in a ritual (*TU* 10.33.35; *MBh* 1.542; and so on). The one who knows the application of the verses in ritual is the one who has knowledge of the multitude [of the gods] *(vyuhānām viniyogajña).* Relatedly, the compound *viniyuktātman* means one who has his mind fixed, or appointed,

toward something. *Viniyoga* is also the title of a work in the *aṅga*s, or limbs of the *Sāma Veda,* which denoted the usages of mantras in the *Sāma Veda (viniyogasaṃgraha).*

The guides for this usage are based on laws of association. In Vedic ritual texts, there is the law of association of *yathāliṅgam. Yathāliṅgam* is a term used in a number of Sanskrit commentaries and ritual Sūtras to describe the characteristics of a deity. As the *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra* 13.3 states, particular ritual actions (associated with particular materials) are to be done according to the characteristics contained in the mantra, such as the name of a deity, the quality of a deity, and so on. This is an explicit statement that association between the mantra and the ritual action is required for the efficacy and the understanding of the ritual.

Finally, let us consider the usage of the important verbal phrase, *manasi saṃnyasya* "having brought the deities to mind," found in the *Vājasaneyi Anukramaṇī,* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* 8.132. (Related phrases and concepts, such as knowledge and ignorance of the deities, and the necessity of knowledge of the deities for the efficacy of sacrifice, are also found in these and many other related texts; see *BD*1.22ff; *Sarvānukramaṇī* 1; *Nirukta* 7.13, 10.42; Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *Ṛg Veda,* and so on). This and other related phrases suggest that the deities are to be thought of, and thought about, as the recitation is happening. The phrase implies that the deities are to be imagined, and imagined properly, in order for the ritual to be efficacious.

We can also point to several more general passages, as Jan Houben also does, which speak of the right effect of the ritual accruing only to the one *ya evaṃ veda*—who knows the implications of the ritual acts in all worlds.[11] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.6.1.1 expresses this idea about the results of the *puruṣamedha* ritual, and the one who knows this "surpasses all beings, and becomes everything here." And *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.2.7.11 shows that the mere knowledge of ritual view or formulas gives *brahmavarcasa* to the knower.[12]

To be even more specific, we might say that the guidelines to the recitation are in fact the semantic properties of the mantra itself, and its capacity to be mentally internalized. However, I want to be very clear here: this does not mean internalization of a vision of a deity in an ecstatic trance. It means, properly speaking, the ability to imagine a deity in all the powers that one needs from him or her as one performs the sacrifice. In sum, this study takes *both* ends of the spectrum into account: the meaningful *viniyogas* and the seemingly "meaningless" *viniyogas.* I want to assume, first and foremost, that meaning *was* at stake, as the

texts intimate—but that it was simply applied *more* or *less* directly. There may be applications that will remain forever obscure to us, but that does not absolve us of the responsibility, armed with the especially helpful theories of performance studies and metonymic thinking, to attempt to interpret the principle behind the *viniyoga*.

HISTORY OF *VINIYOGA:* EARLY INDIA

We have already seen that the process of *viniyoga* shows a bringing of the gods, and many other things, to mind. Moreover, the Śrauta and Gṛhya worlds apply these mantras in new and different situations. Before exploring how these early principles of *viniyoga* might have operated, it is worth turning to a history of the idea of *viniyoga* in Indian and Western thought. It is a robust history so long as ritual remained a robust way of conceiving of the universe. However, many contemporary thinkers, both Western and Indian, who are no longer compelled by the need to sacrifice with particular human aims in mind, tend to throw up their hands in frustration when it comes to the interpretive challenge that *viniyoga* represents.

Mantras of both the *Ṛg* and *Yajur Veda*s are powerful utterances in their own right and a form of eternally existing reality, which the ancient sages "saw" in a kind of canny apprehension of reality. The *Yajur Veda* verses are more commonly used in ritual than the Ṛg Vedic verses, some of which are not used at all in the ritual and others of which came into use only later. The *yajus,* or sacrificial formulae are, after all, specifically designed for use in ritual and consist in great part of Ṛg Vedic verses modified for ritual. While some ritual performers as well as scholars contend that one should only look at the *Yajur Veda* applications because the "fit" is better, in my view this seeming "lack of fit" is what makes the Ṛg Vedic applications more interesting for the purposes of this book: What leaps of imagination and associative perspectives did the interpreters use to make the specific mantras connect to the specific ritual scene? One scholar, Edwin Fay, remarks that this is a literary exercise, and therefore one to be avoided; it is my contention that it is precisely the literary (and therefore inevitably imperfect and speculative) nature of such reading that should be attempted and embraced.[13] The Vedic texts suggest that their authors would want us to proceed no differently.

In general, the different schools of the Veda used their own mantras to apply in their own rituals. The Āśvalāyana school would generally use mantras of the *Ṛg Veda,* it being a Ṛg Vedic branch, the Baudhāyana

school the Taittirīya mantras of the *Yajur Veda,* as the Baudhāyanas derive from that school, and so forth. The later interpreters clearly have knowledge of the precise details of the literature, as they refer to whole sections of a text, such as an *anuvāka,* as if it were common knowledge. Moreover, the Ṛg Vedic mantras went through subtle changes as they were introduced into the ritual literature—going first through the *Yajur Veda,* then into the Brāhmaṇa corpus of texts, and then particularly in the Śrauta and Gṛhya literature, where whole new rites were composed and mantras needed to adapt to these new contexts.

In all these interpretive processes the composers were working on some kind of interpretive principle to match the ritual with the mantra, and vice versa. What *kind* of interpretive principle (metonymic linkage) was being posited? As one scholar, V. M. Apte, notes, even before the idea of *viniyoga* was systematized in the Mīmāṃsā texts, some criteria, such as invocational, sacramental, oblational, and mythological, seem to be the basic criteria for ritual employment. *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.3.5, for example, states quite clearly, "The beginning of an act must be made to coincide with the ends of the mantras, because the mantras denote the act."[14]

In a wonderfully lucid passage, *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* 4.16.12 gives a unique hint as to the reason for *viniyoga,* or ritual employment in the following case:

> [The sacrificer] mutters the mantra called "the taking again" *[punarālambha]* of the sacrifice: "The sacrifice has come into existence, it exists; it has been born, it has waxed great. It has become the overlord of the gods. It must make us overlords. May we be lords of wealth." In the brāhmaṇa text, the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā,* the [following] explanation [for the use of this mantra] is given: "The sacrifice goes away and does not come back; to him who sacrifices knowing the *punarālambha* it does come back. The words cited are the *punarālambha* of the sacrifice, and thereby [the sacrificer] takes [the sacrifice] again."

In other words, the *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* gives its own reason for the *viniyoga:* the mantra is recited in order to keep the sacrifice from running away as it usually does. The sacrifice is conceived as a being in its own right, difficult to control, and only knowledge of the mantra allows it to come back, to be performed again and again.[15]

Generally speaking there is a one-to-one relationship between the mantra and a single ritual act. At their most basic, their functions can be broadly seen in four different ways: (1) consecratory—mantras that make sacred a particular act, such as wedding or a funeral; (2) oblational—mantras that refer to the power of Agni as the oblation is

poured into the domestic fire; (3) purposeful—mantras that comment briefly on the larger purpose, or significance of the act they are to accompany, such as the gaining of progeny of wealth; and (4) benedictions or aversions—mantras that are expressions of wishes, such as for future health, as well as for the avoidance of an evil spirit.[16]

Just as mantra can help the sacrifice to be performed again and again, the composers of early Indian texts argued that mantras themselves can be used again and again. As previous scholars have noted, in *viniyoga* the same mantras can be used in different contexts.[17] To take some general examples, *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.21.7 and many other texts (*ŚGS* 2.91; *PGS* 1.88; *MGS* 1.10.13) prescribe the same mantra for the initiation of a student into the course of Vedic study and a bond with his teacher. Yet the marriage rite also prescribes the same mantra, only with the substitution of the god Prajāpati for the god Bṛhaspati, who presides over the initiation into Vedic study.

Many mantras were seen as utilizable in two different contexts *without* change or substitution in the content. For example, a mantra for the health of the eyes is used in the case of facial or eye tics in one Gṛhya Sūtra (*ĀGS* 3.68); in another (*MGS* 1.9.25) the same mantra is used for the bride who is putting on her ornaments; and in another it is for a person washing himself (*PGS* 2.6.19).

Relatedly, the mantric formula may be of such length that its references—what I call its semantic possibilities—could be varied as well. To take one example briefly, the mantra cited in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 3.2.1 refers both to a successful sacrificer and the creation of a desirable heaven for the sacrificer. Thus it engages two different poetic images. What is its *viniyoga?* Intriguingly, it is used in the same Gṛhya Sūtra (1.7.1; 3.4.1) for two different purposes: the first application is for use after an offering; the second application is to bless a sacrificer who is about to die. The first application is a very straightforward way in which, at the end of the sacrifice, the imaginative world of a successful sacrifice that may result in heaven is called to mind by the mantra. In the second, we see a moving existential application whereby the same image of heaven gained by successful sacrifice is imminent at the moment of death.

This phenomenon might be called "hyperapplicability" of mantra to ritual and lies at one end of the spectrum. There is of course another end of the spectrum, which is the opaque uses of mantra in ritual, where there seems to be no semantic connection at all with the ritual action being performed. For example, one Gṛhya Sūtra (*MGS* 2.11.13) prescribes a mantra for the placing of a sacrificial post: the mantra is a

hymn to the Vasus (a group of eight deities of day: water, moon, polestar, wind, fire, dawn, and sun), and it is not immediately clear what the connection is.

Many times the best guess is a metaphorical one, and our task is to make educated guesses. For example, in *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (1.24.8) the offering of a drink to a guest is to be taken by the guest with the words, "I am the summit of those who are like me."[18] Here the guest is commenting on his metaphorical status gained by virtue of his special treatment by his host, and it is even more apropos as the guest is about to take a seat. This association is metonymic identification, whereby through the mantra the guest identifies with his role as guest, as well as with his host, who is "like me."

That there was an *indirect* fit in the usages of many mantras was already well known to the earlier authors. Śaunaka, the author of the *Bṛhaddevatā,* offers a way of dealing with this in the case of ambiguity as to which deity owned any particular mantra. "Between [the deity appropriate to] the application of the mantra and the [deities named in] the mantra, the application is more important. There should be careful observance as to the rule of these two."[19] That is to say, the way one decides which deity is predominant in a mantra with two or more deities is to consider the application *(prayoga)* of the ritual, over and above what may be stated in the mantra itself. For instance, RV 7.6 praises both deities Bhāga, a god of wealth, and Uṣas, who is the dawn. How would one tell which deity was predominant? The answer is Bhāga, for the hymn as a whole is employed as a desire *(āśīs)* for wealth, and within the hymn, it is to Bhāga that one addresses statements of that object of wealth. As *Bṛhaddevatā* 3.53 goes on, "The deity to whom one addresses statements of an object *[arthavāda]* is to be known as owning the *sūkta,* but the one whom one praises on occasion is to be recognized as incidental." Thus in the case of RV 7.6, the ritual application of the mantra as a desire for wealth determines the predominant deity, not the fact that the mantra mentions Uṣas, dawn, as well. To corroborate this example BD 3.51 does indeed declare Bhāga to be the main deity of RV 7.6.

The discussion above uses terminology quite similar to the Mīmāṃsā schools of ritual interpretation. In Mīmāṃsā, mantras are statements of assertion or designation, and thus they may not contain those injunctive statements of what one *ought* to do, which are indicative of *dharma*. Because mantras are not seen to be injunctive, in themselves they could not provide a rule for clarifying ritual situations. They need interpretation as to their application, such as the *Bṛhaddevatā*'s problem of which deity should be predominant.

The *Bṛhaddevatā* goes on to discuss another example: "Therefore from that [there might be] disagreement among [the deity mentioned in the] mantras [and the deity which is intended in the ritual]. The words occurring in [the mantras] which are understood in a general way might be a particular designation [of the deity in the ritual]" (*BD* 5.95). In other words, a mantra might contain the word Jātavedas, who is generally understood to mean Agni. However, if the ritual employment of the mantra involves asking Indra for wealth in the form of cows, the name Jātavedas might be applied to Indra instead, as a particular quality or secondary designation of him — Indra as knower of beings, and not Agni. The *Bṛhaddevatā* closes its discussion by repeating its emphasis on ritual employment as a form of knowledge: "The mantras being secondary and the rites being primary, the deities may be primary or secondary, thus it is understood" (*BD* 5.96). Therefore, one determines the importance of a deity according to what deity is meant in the rite (which is the primary form of knowledge) and not according to what deity is mentioned in the mantra (which is a secondary form of knowledge). In this small but important *śloka,* Śaunaka seems to be saying two things: first, that even though it seems that there is a straightforward meaning to the mantra, there is also a secondary meaning that could be utilized when it comes time for applying it; second, that application is the key. This idea gives a great deal of leeway to the interpreters, who can find as many other secondary meanings as there are other words in the mantra itself.

The *Bṛhaddevatā* and many other texts focus on the deity as the major connective tissue between the mantra and the action of the ritual. This topic of the connection between the word and the act is shared and developed much more fully by the Mīmāṃsā school of ritual philosophy. Let us turn now to the Mīmāṃsā perspective on *viniyoga.* Briefly, the Mīmāṃsā school flourished in the fourth century BCE after its first thinker, Jaimini, composed his Sūtras of ritual philosophy. Jaimini's Sūtras were composed in order to ascertain *dharma* — proper conduct — in the massive sacrificial Vedic corpus. Vedic injunction — direct statement of what ought to happen — is the primary textual category to which all other categories are subsidiary. The Jaimini Sūtras give several ways in which a mantra can be applied in ritual — ways *viniyoga* can occur. The text articulates six principles, including the application, or appropriate usage, of ritual instruments and actions as well as mantras. The principles are called linguistic *pramāṇa* — or principles of application.

The first principle is direct expression, or *śruti* (*JS* 1.7.17–27; *JGS* 3.2.3–4). Direct expression usually involves a case suffix that expresses an injunction, which would therefore be indicative of *dharma* (the "you

should do this" case: *kārakavibhakti*). If a Vedic text directly states that a mantra should be used in a particular ritual situation, then that statement becomes the rule and all other statements and indications about the use of the mantra are subsidiary to it. Thus, even if a mantra is directly addressed to Indra, but there is a *śruti* that states it should be for the worship of Agni, then the worship of Agni takes precedence.[20]

The second term is *liṅga,* or indirect expression (*JS* 3.2). Such indirect expression can be a secondary aspect of a word that indirectly refers to the purpose of the ritual. This form of indirect relationship should always have a direct *śruti* underlying it as well. For instance, a mantra is to be used at the drinking of leftover Soma after a ritual (*TS* 3.2.5.1). This mantra is to be used not only with the act of drinking, which is directly expressed, but also with all the other actions implied, such as the taking up of juice in the hand, examining it, swallowing it, digesting it, and so forth. These are the implications, or secondary aspects, of the act of drinking. Note the similarity to the pragmatic metonymic construction "I hailed a taxi," which implied all sorts of other actions (getting in to the vehicle, driving to the destination, and so on) as well.

The third principle of application is *vākya,* or syntactic unity (*JS* 3.3.1–10). *Vākya* applies when, in the same sentence (or other clearly designated grammatical unit), there is the expectation of one word by another. In other words, if a word in one passage is ambiguous, the confusion might be unambiguously clarified later on in the same sentence. To take a general example, there are times when it is unclear whether the word *ṛk* refers simply to a "verse" or whether it means the entire *Ṛg Veda.* The same goes for *yajus*—does it refer to a prose passage of directions, or to the entire *Yajur Veda?* In one case of ambiguity in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* this confusion is clarified, because later in the same *vākya,* the *Ṛg* and *Yajur Veda*s are mentioned. Thus it should be concluded that the entire texts of the two Vedas, and not the simple meanings "verse" and "prose passage," were meant in the earlier mention of the words *ṛk* and *yajur.* Here again, we see the metonymic principle of association by contiguity—by virtue of the clarifying words being nearby, in the same *vākya,* we can make a comparison.[21]

The fourth principle is *prakaraṇa,* or contextual unity (*JS* 3.3.11). This idea assumes that there is no direct or indirect statement, and no syntactical unity (use in the same sentence) to help clarify how a mantra is to be used. Therefore one must rely on the context of an entire passage. For example, the most complete description of any particular Vedic sacrifice involves naming both a goal, such as desiring heaven, and a proce-

dure, such as offering butter into the fire. However, in some Vedic texts, certain sacrifices are named as having a certain goal, but there is no procedure connected with them. Other sacrifices are named with a procedure, but no goal is specified. The Mīmāṃsā commentators would say that, because they are discussed in the same passage (even if not the same sentence), these two sacrifices provide a "mutual need" or context for the other. The sacrifice that has a goal, say of desiring heaven, can also provide the goal of the other sacrifice, which lacks a goal. And the sacrifice that has a procedure in its description provides the procedure for the other sacrifice, which lacks one.[22]

The fifth principle is *krama,* or "order" (*JS* 3.3.12). There might be an occasion whereby a mantra is specified in a Vedic text, but no use is given, and the previous means of discerning the *viniyoga* are not possible. For example, there may be three mantras named in a particular order. If there is a similarity of order between the three mantras named and three specific sacrifices named later on in the passage, then one can infer that mantra number 1 is to be used in sacrifice number 1, mantra number 2 in sacrifice number 2, and so on.

Finally, the sixth principle of application is *samākhya* or "name" (*JS* 3.3.13). Here, the Mīmāṃsā commentators argue that the ritual name of a mantra itself can be used as a form of principled *viniyoga.* For example, the *hautra mantra* is the name of a particular mantra that belongs to the *hotṛ* and thus through its name we can discern how it might be used.

All the Jaimini Sūtras that discuss *viniyoga* are focused on whether the mantra can be seen as an effective means toward a ritual end. If the mantra meets the criteria above, then it can be seen as efficacious in reaching its goals. To put it in ritual terms, there must be "something to be done" *kārya bhāva*—in order for the *viniyoga* to work. Moreover, each of these exegetical principles *(śruti; liṅga; vākya; prakaraṇa; krama; samākhya)* are graded, in that they are less and less authoritative the further down the scale they go. That is because their proximity to the first *pramāṇa, śruti,* becomes less and less the further down the list one progresses (*JS* 3.3.14).

As was evident from our explanation, each of these application is the next "resort" if the previous form of *viniyoga* does not work. And notice that all of them involve some form of metonymic thought—similarity based on contiguity in a sentence, based on contextual frame, on similarity of order, and so on.

Now, all these principles of *viniyoga* were articulated probably slightly after the time period of exegetical analysis with which I am dealing—

namely the period in which the Āśvalāyana and the Śāṅkhāyana schools were sacrificing. They are also clearly based on some aspect of the meaning of mantra, whether it is the indirect references contained in it, the order within it, what it does not say but what is implied, and so on. Finally, these Mīmāṃsā principles are instructive in that they are also based on ideas of verbal (syntactic, grammatical, nominal) and imaginative (contextual, order-based) association that make the ritual action more effective.

ARTHA AS PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAME; *DEVATĀ* AS MOTIVATOR

Indeed, an important article has recently appeared in which this issue of imagining the gods in early Mīmāṃsā is also taken up. In his, "What's a God? The Quest for the Right Understanding of Devatā in Brāhmaṇical Ritual Theory *(mīmāṃsā)*," Francis Clooney emphasizes that Mīmāṃsā confronted the plurality of *devatā,* the multiple names in which *devatā*s were invoked and the inevitable substitutions that arose, as we saw in the case of the *Bṛhaddevatā* above.[23] The need for simplicity led to a consideration of what a *devatā* is, how it is to be defined, how it functions, and for what purposes.

Clooney goes on to discuss the various questions concerning Jaimini and his earliest commentators Śabara and Kumarila. Is a *devatā* properly the recipient of a sacrifice, can it be said to have agency, and so on. In *Jaimini Sūtra* 9.1.6–10, Jaimini discusses the idea of *devatā* as an objective referent. They wrestle with an opponent who argues that it might be the object of sacrifice to please the *devatā.* No, they argue the opposite: (in my words) it is the object of the *devatā*s, as instruments of the sacrifice, to help fulfill the aims of the sacrifice. The result of the sacrifice should be in line with the aim of the sacrifice, and the act is the means to the result. *Devatā,* rice, and firewood are the wherewithal to that act.

Clooney then makes a point that is crucial for our considerations here: that *devatā* is necessarily projected as a goal, but psychologically the possibility of getting results is all the more forceful and conducive to action with the mention of a devatā.[24] In other words, it is clear that *devatā* is subservient to both the aims of the rite *(artha),* and the results of the rite. But nonetheless *devatā* acts as an important motivator. These ideas are related to what McCauley and Lawson meant by the emotional engagement and cognitive control of a ritual.

Śabara goes on to wrestle with the question of whether the *devatā* should be acknowledged as an external thing, or merely a word *(śabda)*

used in the sacrifice. Here, the second meaning of the word *artha* comes in, as the "meaning" of the word itself in addition to the goal of the sacrifice. Śabara emphasizes the linguistic basis of the *devatā* as a tool in the sacrifice; its status as word is the only thing that helps with the larger goal (*artha* number 1) of the sacrifice, and its external referent or its semantic meaning (*artha* number 2) is secondary to that. However, Śabara does not exclude the question of meaning and external reference entirely; he argues in effect that part of the efficacy of the word still is based on the fact that it does have meaning in reliance on the word's referent.[25]

While Clooney goes on to analyze important debates in later Mīmāṃsā thinkers on this topic of *artha* and *śabda,* our concern here is with the earlier debates above and how they connect to our topic of imagining a god. He concludes that, due to their project of organizing the sacrifice along linguistic lines, Mīmāṃsā thinkers must minimize, but not entirely exclude, the extralinguistic possibilities within their system, such as considerations of the reality of the gods that are invoked. *Devatā*s can never be "just a word"; they must be primarily a word. Nor can their powers ever be conceived as "wholly other" or "wholly outside" the verbal text of the Veda.

Clooney's second conclusion is that, because the starting point of Mīmāṃsic inquiry must be attention to syntax and definition, the system's theology is based on the primacy of language. However, Clooney emphasizes that this concern does not veer off immediately into a theory of language; rather, "it remains first and foremost a theory intentionally rooted in the dynamics of language as praxis."[26]

Clooney's emphasis on language as praxis in early Indian sacrifice, as well as the idea of *devatā* as psychologically important in achieving the goals of the sacrifice, is important for the project of thinking about *viniyoga.* While these discussions are later than the texts we are dealing with, many of the texts show relationships with early Mīmāṃsā ideas and practices about the relative primacy and order of sacrificial practices such as word, act, actor, ritual instrument, and so on. If Clooney is right, then even a primarily verbal view of *devatā* still leaves room for the idea that a mental image produced by language can be juxtaposed to, and associated with, other instruments of ritual in order to help the ritual proceed effectively. This is exactly what occurs in Vedic metonymy.

Moreover, Clooney suggests that the goal of the ritual serves as its "frame," similar to the way in which the context of the speaking situation serves as the frame for certain metonymic linkages. *Artha,* then, in its sense as "goal of the ritual" might be viewed as a psychological frame that determines the way Vedic ritual language functions and that aspects

of an utterance are emphasized over other aspects. If the *artha* is wealth, then the psychological motivations to select out certain *devatā*s and to hear certain aspects of an entire recited *sūkta* as related to wealth will be geared in that direction.

VINIYOGA AS METONYMY

When a mantra is applied in a specific situation, and the author of a Śrauta or a Gṛhya Sūtra or Vidhāna text decides to place the mantra in that particular ritual situation, then the situation for metonymic thinking is also set up. How?

The first way is that the poetic images of the mantra are specifically juxtaposed to the ritual situations. This understanding of linkage has not generally been the assumption of Indologists who have studied this material. For the most part, scholars have addressed obvious connections and dismiss those less obvious as difficult or fanciful in nature. Yet it was clear that the editors of texts were aware of various kinds of linkages.

First, the same formula can be used appropriately in two different situations, with slight modifications. Let us take another look at the examples cited above: a rite establishing an intimate relationship between husband and wife uses a particular mantra (*PGS* 1.8.8; *MGS* 1.10.13), and the same mantra is used to establish a relationship between preceptor and pupil in the next case. The only difference is that, in the first case, the creator god Prajāpati, the maker of all beings, is used, and in the second case, Bṛhaspati, the priest of gods and Lord of eloquence, is used. The modification is appropriate and straightforward. In terms of the metonymic connection, we might say that use of the god Prajāpati makes the associative linkage between the marriage and the goal of progeny; the use of the god Bṛhaspati makes the associative linkage between the initiation into Vedic study and the goal of knowledge.[27]

To take another, very simple example cited above, from the Āśvalāyana school (*ĀGS* 3.6.8): a mantra is set up for a person whose eye palpitates: "May I become beautiful-eyed in my eyes" *[sucakṣā aham akṣībhyāṃ bhūyāsaṃ]*. Here, the associative connection would be between the image of the eye and the person's shaking eye: it is toward the goal of the health of the eye that the mantra is spoken. In another context (*MGS* 1.9.25) the same mantra is spoken by a bride who touches parts of her body mentioned in the formula and puts on ornaments as she does so. In this case, the goal *(artha)* is beauty and well being in marriage, and the associative connection is between the eyes of the bride as they are being decorated and those of the mantra.

As the Mīmāṃsā also states, the *artha,* or goal, governs the use of the mantra. This means that each situation is highly contextualized by virtue of its being applied — just like the contextual properties of metonym and its resulting pragmatism. Just as "the gallbladder's" medication is driven by the contexts or frame of the hospital and the goal of healing, so too the "eyes" in the mantra are not a specific person's eyes, but they *are* metonymically connected to a specific actor by virtue of the ritual situation. The eyes of the mantra, like the gallbladder, are a general word that become specific signifiers in context. The eyes of person can be either the palpitating eye or the wedding eyes of the bride. This is the contextual pragmatism of metonymy par excellence.

It is also the case that, just as there is a one-to-one relationship between the "base" and its target in metonymy, here there is usually a one-to-one relationship between the ritual act or actor and the mantra. There may be several serial possibilities of metonymic connections within that single mantra, but each one is different in nature. For instance, a mantra could describe the act and the significance of the act, or the result one desires to attain in one poetic phrase, or both. Thus its utterance in a ritual situation could effect a series of metonymic connections between the actor, the act, and its significance, sequentially. For example, *Agni Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.5.1 applies this mantra for the ritual of taking the sacred fire into one's own person: "I take into myself first Agni [act] for the increase of wealth, for good progeny, for energetic sons [person]. I put in myself progeny, illustriousness. May we be uninjured in our bodies [and] rich in energetic sons."

This mantra provides a series of metonymic links between ritual actor and poetic image: Agni is metonymically linked with the ritual actor (first metonymical link) through the phrase "I take into myself." Then Agni becomes identified with, linked to, progeny (the purpose of the rite), and in the subsequent verse *the purpose* (progeny) becomes the thing that is ingested (second metomymic link). Two domains that are related to each other (Agni and progeny) have become one expression — the essence of metonymy. In the actual uttering of the mantra in a ritual situation, the links are even more complex, as the associative links between the sacrificer and the *actual fire,* as well as the *actual fire* and the progeny, are also suggested.[28]

The referential capacities inherent in Vedic epithets, and in metonym in general, are also clear in *viniyoga.* Consider the following case (*ŚBM* 1.1.2; *GGS* 2.1.10), where the bride is washed with *surā,* a kind of beer, when the mantra is pronounced: "O Kāma, I know your name. You are intoxication by name. Bring him [the bridegroom] together [with her]. To

you there was *surā*. Here [may there be] excellent birth. O Agni, you are created from penance, *svāhā!*" *Surā,* or intoxicating liquid, is said to cause *kāma,* desire and sexual excitement. Thus the gods of passion and intoxication are identified with each other, and then further identified with Agni, the god of the domestic fire. Moreover, in the last part of the mantra, it is stated that Agni is produced by Prajāpati through penance *(tapas)*. This mantra, in itself, builds up three metonyms, and its application brings up at least one, if not two, more. First, *kāma* is metonymically connected to intoxication: he is the god whose nature is intoxication. Second, *kāma*/intoxication is linked to *surā,* the beer used to wash the bride. By implication, the bride is therefore being washed in sexual desire. Finally, excellent birth, presumably the result of the desire, is connected in the next line with penance and the domestic sacrificial fire. Thus each naming sets up a series of elements that mutually refer to each other. Now the *viniyoga:* the entire mantra is uttered as the bride is being washed and thus could be seen as a description of the married state in which she is now in — the alternation between desire and penance. Like Balzac's Madame Vaquet, who takes on the qualities of her boarding house, the bride and the married state are compared to each other in the utterance of the mantra in a series of metonymic links. Each has the qualities of the other.[29]

Prototypical thinking is also common in the application of mantra. In Vedic literature, there are clear statements that there is a subcategory of ritual actor that is the best representative of that category ritual actor. For instance, GGS 1.9.3 says, "Through the Brahmins being satiated (with ritual food) I become satiated myself." The use of this mantra creates the prototype of the brahmin — who is the identified with as the best subcategory to fulfill the category "ritual eater." One is then metonymically linked and identified to him. A similar process can be identified in the more general examples "I pick up this grass with the arms of Indra" or "Here is the power of Savitṛ." In a *viniyoga* of these mantras, the link is not just in the mental image evoked by the poetry, but now identification between the ritual actor and the *image* as well.

THE HISTORY OF *VINIYOGA:* INDOLOGY

Viniyoga has been an understudied phenomenon in the world of Vedic mantra — relegated to a few excellent monographs in the twentieth century. A review of its treatment will make an even stronger case for the introduction of performance studies and metonymy as new frames of ref-

erence. The Indologists knew how difficult it was to outline particular principles upon which mantra application proceeds. As nineteenth-century Indologist Edwin Fay noted, "An investigation of the relation which obtains between the mantra and the rite with which it is rubricated is a literary task of a very subjective nature." He argued further, "In modern literature in general we are often aware that illustrative quotations do not illustrate."[30] The question then becomes: Why are the illustrations there in the first place? What cognitive value do they have, and why did *viniyoga,* or application, even emerge as a hermeneutic principle?

The history of the Indological problem requires us to delve into dissertations and disputes from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of the earliest thinkers about *viniyoga* was Hermann Oldenberg, who was concerned with the continuity of mantras from the *Ṛg* to the *Yajur Veda*s.[31] As is now clear, *Yajur Veda* used the mantras fairly faithfully, with added passages about the etiology of the mantras and their ritual usages. Oldenberg wondered, "Why did some of the mantras remain the same from one text to another, with the 'explanatory' passages added in the later *Yajur Veda?*" Oldenberg noted further that some of the Brāhmaṇas contained mantras that were slightly altered. Moreover, the later set of texts, the Sūtras, showed even more alteration still.

How do we explain the slight changes that the next set of texts, the Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras, make, in the Ṛg Vedic mantras? Oldenberg believed that, on the whole, both Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras made these changes in order to suit ritual needs of the sacrifice. They were conscious changes, but still paid primary respect to what is called "the textus receptus," or received text.[32] In other words, that *viniyoga,* or application of mantra, was adapted with the composition of each new genre of texts—and words of the Ṛg Vedic mantra were slightly changed to help with the ritual performance. But the emphasis here should be slight; there is still remarkable fidelity to the frozen text of the *Ṛg Veda* itself.

Oldenberg's colleague Alf Hillebrandt put forth the bolder thesis that the changed mantras in the Sūtras represented a "ritual recension" of the *Ṛg Veda,* which existed along side of the accepted text of the *Ṛg Veda*. Indeed, Thomas Oberlies has recently argued that the *Ṛg Veda* itself can be viewed as a ritual recension, in that it possesses the hymns of book 9, for use in the Soma ritual.[33] This recension might have been a handbook of verses more appropriate to ritual, but which gradually over time got harmonized with the accepted text. Hillebrandt's view is the opposite of Oldenberg's, and they spilt some ink over the debate. The larger question is: How does one deal with the fact that there are certain *viniyoga*s that

may not correspond cleanly with either the earlier text of the *Ṛg Veda,* or with the ritual in which they are used?

Responding in part to this debate, and using almost all of the Ṛg Vedic schools at his disposal, Edwin Fay set out the following in a detailed 1890 doctoral dissertation. He argued that there are "degrees" of applicability of mantras: (1)general applicability, to be used for almost every conceivable location; (2) specific applicability, in which the mantra actually speaks of the rite being enacted; (3) in-between cases, based on similarity of a single word or phrase within the mantra and an action within the rite (Fay calls these "homonymous citations"); and (4) warranty citations, mantras that serve to "seal" a ritual act, somewhat like legal citations in the present day or "proof-texts" in the doctrinal study of the Bible.[34] Fay assumes throughout that the mantra is primary, and that the ritual changes to fit the mantra, rather than the other way around. As these debates and theories were being conducted, some other relevant texts were also edited to help answer the questions, such as Winternitz's *Mantrapāṭha* and Knauer's *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra,* and so on.[35]

This curiosity about the fit between mantras and mantra changes in many ways resembles the *ākhyāna/itihāsa* debate, about which I have written earlier.[36] There, the question that many of these same Indologists were concerned with the explanatory material, called *itihāsa,* which was found in traditions later than the *Ṛg Veda,* but which were based on it. These *itihāsa*s provided the specific contexts for many of the mythological details and references found in the hymns. Oldenberg, Winternitz, Charpentier, and others' questions were these: Did the hymns of the *Ṛg Veda* precede the "frame tales" that explained them, or was the *itihāsa* tradition contemporaneous with the hymns themselves? Did the *itihāsa* tradition perhaps even precede the hymns?

Such a debate was preoccupied with origins and the ways in which origins determine later histories. The earlier literature on *viniyoga* thus rejected the "literary endeavor" that Fay and others deemed too difficult. Rather, the early authors opted in favor of tracing the differences in citation practices in later schools in an attempt to discover origins. In 1927, B. C. Lele continued this tracing of citation practices in order to glean traces of the *Atharva Veda,* the "Veda of the masses" in the later Śrauta and Gṛhya material. As he writes, "If the admission of the Atharvan into the fold of *trayi vidya* took place prior to the redaction of the Saṃhitās, it is unlikely that the three Vedas should not have been influenced by the Atharvan rites and practices."[37] By examining the Brāhmaṇa and the Sūtra literature from this point of view, he attempted to see how much they were

influenced by Atharvan rites and practices. His conclusion is that there was a gradual brahmanization of the Atharvan material, resulting in the Gṛhya Sūtras, which contain many mantras from the *Atharva Veda.* Each Gṛhya Sūtra was modeled on the larger Śrauta ceremony. And as the Śrauta ceremonies became less and less lucrative, Gṛhya rites were brahmanized in a kind of power struggle between more and less prestigious priests. All of Lele's history — remarkably like the hermeneutics of suspicion present today — is gleaned from interpreting mantras for the cessation of rivalry between cowives, a charm for cattle, and other Atharva Vedic citations in the daily rituals of the Gṛhya Sūtras.

In a masterful study from 1938, V. M. Apte also uses this principle of mantra citation to get at a social and religious history of the Gṛhya Sūtra world. In his monograph, *Ṛg Veda Mantras in Their Ritual Setting in the Gṛhya Sūtra,* he rightly tried to distinguish what sorts of rights and ceremonies were implied by the Ṛg Vedic texts themselves, and how the *Ṛg Veda* citations were actually used by the Gṛhya Sūtra texts almost a millenium later. He assumed, as would be characteristic of his time, that the Gṛhya Sūtra texts represented a "real world" out there in early India. A contemporary exegete would be more suspicious, assuming rather an idealized Gṛhya Sūtra world in the text that is only partly indicative of reality.

Later in 1958, P. K. N. Pillai completed a study of the *non*-Ṛg Vedic mantras in the marriage *vivāha* ceremonies, with a view to those Gṛhya mantras that might not have been taken from other sources, but rather were made up for the Gṛhya ceremonies themselves. Pillai designated several principles of finding out where the mantras come from: the first is *pratīka,* the practice of how a mantra is cited. The *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.1.17–19 also indicates a pattern of citation practice for ritual usages of mantras: when a *pratīka,* usually the first quarter verse *(pada)* of the mantra, is recited, then the whole verse is indicated; if it is less than a *pada,* then a whole *sūkta* or hymn, is indicated; if more than a *pada* is cited, then a triplet is indicated. This is usually the case for the schools of the *Ṛg Veda* when they refer to Ṛg Vedic verses. Thus if this practice is in place, one can safely assume that a Ṛg Vedic mantra is being employed. For Pillai, a second principle is finding a parallel Gṛhya Sūtra text from the same *śākhā,* or branch, which uses that same mantra, and seeing the parallel as the source for the mantra. Thus one could assume the mantra originated in the Gṛhya Sūtra world.

Most importantly for our purposes, Pillai then cited the *viniyoga* principle. As he writes, "A close observation of the process of the transfer of

mantras from Śrauta rites to the Gṛhya ceremonies will lead to the inference that their *viniyoga* or liturgical application had weighed much with the ritualists who effected the transfer. Before effecting the transfer of a mantra from a Śrauta to a Gṛhya rite, they took care to see that there was some kind of affinity between the two contexts. And this is but natural since they were well versed in both the strata of the ritual, Śrauta and Gṛhya." In other words, if a Śrauta text uses the same mantra as a Gṛhya text for a similar kind of ritual, then the Śrauta text can be safely assumed to be the source of the mantra.

Pillai's final three principles — that of textual agreement, confirmatory evidence, and earliest parallel — are all fairly self-explanatory. The portrait that results in Pillai's rather long index of non-Ṛg Vedic mantras is one of ritual creativity and flexibility in part of the ancient *vivāha,* or marriage ceremony. Rituals were added, such as the priest washing and putting on the bride a fresh bridal garment; these new rituals were also accompanied by mantras suited to the occasion. For instance, references to the many threaded garments woven by the wives, and a wish that "such garments touch us pleasantly" (*AV* 14.2.51), is an example of a mantra found to match the new ceremony.

Finally, in 1965 Jan Gonda addressed the question of the connection between mantras and their ritual context in a little-known paper from the *Adyar Library Bulletin.* I would like to suggest that, inherent in the idea of *viniyoga* is the earlier idea of *bandhu,* found in the Brāhmaṇas, and the topic of Gonda's article. He argues that, while earlier Indologists have tried to "fix" a meaning of *bandhu* as something like "intrinsic connection" it is far more complex and probably implied all the meanings attached to it by Indologists — such as original mystery, primary signification, connection between this world and the heavenly world, primal connection, and so forth. There can be a *bandhu* of an element used in the sacrifice, a *bandhu* between two elements of a sacrifice, and so on. Gonda is concerned in one part of his paper with the *bandhu* of mantras themselves: He writes, "The formula used is not only the mere symbol of something divine or transcendent, it is identified with it. Manipulation or activation of the sacred word thus becomes manipulation or activation of that something for which the word stands."[38] He gives the example of the *bandhu* of the *yajus* formula spoken about in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.2.2: "At the impulse of the divine Savitṛ, I pour you out, with the arms of the Aśvins, with the hands of Pūṣan." The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* explains that Savitṛ is the impeller of the gods, the Aśvins are their *adhvaryu* priests, and Pūṣan is the distributor of portions. In other words, each deity has a sacrificial counterpart.

By means of mantras, the ritual act becomes a reenactment in the human world of processes that take place in the realm of the divine powers. Gonda also cites the example of ŚB 1.1.2.17: "He takes the rice as one impelled by Savitṛ." He writes, "This must be the *bandhu* of the formulas — namely, their connection with the processes going on outside the sacrificial ground. These processes at the same time are their motivation, their raison d'etre, to which they owe their effectiveness. The ceremonious recitation of the formulas makes the power inherent in them effective."[39]

However, there is far more to these ideas about *bandhu* than the reenactment and the speech act. There is metonymic connection between word and action — the mantra's power to refer, to identify, to create a world — and that, too, is part of *bandhu.* If it were not for the words describing the action of the ritual in one way or another, through direction, indirection, and association, then they would cease to be effective. Mīmāṃsā commentators and Gonda both agree that efficaciousness comes through the linking of word and act in a variety of techniques. It is also important to note that metonymy is the linguistically powerful side of *bandhu,* but for Gonda the power of *bandhu* would go beyond language.

As I too have argued earlier, Gonda would prefer not to call this idea magic. Because a *bandhu* is a connection from which one cannot release oneself, and is instead a kind of eternal connection, it has far more significance than simple magic would allow. As he writes,

> One should hesitate to subscribe to Schayer's view that this symbolism is "magical" in nature. Some terms have indeed made too lavish a use of this term. We had better say, with Goode, that any given magical or religious system is concretely not to be found at either extreme, theoretical pole — pure magic or pure religion, but somewhere in between the two, that is to say, magic and religion represent a continuum and are distinguished only ideal-typically. Although in this *bandhu* theory [and relatedly *viniyoga* theory] and the rites presupposing it, magical elements are not necessarily absent, the religious characteristics turn the scale: the Vedic rituals are not thought of as directed against society, but on the contrary as an indispensable means of maintaining the universal order; they must be carried out as part of the structure of the universe; their time relations are fixed; the officiants are to the highest degree concerned with the intrinsic meaning of the ritual, maintaining by a knowledge of the *bandhu*s the proper relations with the powers.[40]

Like *bandhu, viniyoga* is concerned with the effective relationship of word and act. The *viniyoga* procedure is a cognitive procedure of association between the word and the context in which it is uttered. This basis

of association could be as minimal as a similarity of sound, or a similar placement in a sentence, or as maximal as the larger divine powers of the universe itself.

Gonda reiterates this perspective in his discussion of mantras' *viniyoga*s in the ritual Sūtras, albeit in a slightly more prosaic form.[41] Yet Gonda's perspectives are not generally heeded. Did these same Vedic composers who proceeded so carefully simply stop "thinking" when it came to the applications that aren't comprehensible to us? Or should we assume that they weren't affected by momentary brain seizures and continued to apply some form of hermeneutic principle? I assume the second and further assume that it may be possible for us to speculate about it today, with the help of ethnographic and ritual details that were deemed irrelevant by earlier Indologists.

This case provides an example from Fay's excellent dissertation, which was also treated by Oldenberg earlier. In *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛyha Sūtra* 1.15.3, a mantra (*RV* 1.82.2) is uttered as the wife is about to set out on her wedding journey, when she anoints the axle of the cart in which she rides. RV 1.82.2 begins *akṣann amīmadanta:* "Well have they eaten and rejoiced, the friends have risen and passed away. The self-luminous sages have praised you with their latest hymn. Now Indra, yoke your two bay steeds." Fay argued that the entire point of this citation seems to consist in the paronomasia between the word *akṣa,* axle, and the homonymous *akṣan,* "they have eaten," of the mantra.[42]

Equipped with significant new ideas about context, performance, and metonymy, twenty-first century interpreters would differ with such a view. First, those who have been to an Indian wedding ceremony know that there is a break in the festivities between the large celebrations after the event and the moment when the bride must leave her family. The Śāṅkhāyana text itself attests to this. Second, the chariot was probably pulled by horses. Thus the reference to the end of the party, when everyone has enjoyed themselves and then gone away, and the reference to the horses are both entirely appropriate to the ritual contexts in which it is occurring. The bride would naturally want a safe journey, and consecrating the axle is part of that wish. To use our previous terms, the ritual of leave-taking and the ritual images of walking away from house and family give each other particular poignancy by virtue of being metonymically linked. The bride is in effect commenting on the transition into a new phase of her life, as the revelry dies down. The reference to the ancient sages gives the wedding cosmic importance, linking the priests who officiate at the wedding to the first sacrificers. Finally, the steeds of

the cast are linked to Indra's horses and cart — again making this bridal cast metonymically connected to the prototypical cast of that most sexual of warriors, Indra.

Fay did not pay attention to the human particulars of ritual detail that would have told him a great deal. This mantra is not nonsensical, depending only on similarity of sound. Rather, it is deeply linked with sense — the sense of leave-taking and transition — and all the more colorful because of the linkages made between mantric image and ritual act. Is it fair to pick on an 1890 doctoral thesis? No, except for the fact that such perspectives are repeated all the way up to the present.

MALAMOUD

One scholar has followed Gonda's advice, in a small but significant way. In his "Rites and Texts," Charles Malamoud examines some of this issue of the application of mantra in a discussion of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.[43] As his test case, he uses the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*'s explanation of the *dvādaśāha,* where the text constructs a kind of gird in which the days of the sacrifice are marked by *rūpa*s, translated as "symbols" or "characteristics." (The *Bṛhaddevatā* uses the term *liṅga,* or *lakṣana,* also found in the commentaries of Sāyaṇa.) The days themselves are organized into a group of six, then a group of three, and the last day, the tenth. Just as in *viniyoga,* the Brāhmaṇa does nothing more than present us with a list of these markings, without informing us about the general relation between the *rūpa* in the mantra and the "number" of the day it indicates. However, it does tell us that mantras of the first day bear the various markings of one; mantras of the second day bear the various markings of two, and so on.

Malamoud goes on to suggest that the connection between a day and its *rūpa* must be more than mere code, however, since two Brāhmaṇas use the same mantra for two different days, under different rubrics. (For instance, *ud,* or "upward," is a *rūpa* of the second day in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and of the third day in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*). Malamoud observes, "What is altogether remarkable is the perceived need to symbolize, through so many cumulative measures, something that is a given in the real world, an inevitable objective fact: that is the place of a given day in a series of days, and the ranking of a given number in a series of numbers."[44] Objective facts are supplemented here by the reality of the images that reflect them and the signs that point to them.

What are the *rūpa*s, or markings of any given day? They are words, or

verbal roots, or verbal tenses, or some feature of word order. A verb in the future is a *rūpa* of the first day; a verb in the present is a *rūpa* of the second day; a verb in the past is a *rūpa* of the third day. Moreover, the name of a divinity mentioned in the first verse of a stanza is a *rūpa* of the first day, and in the final verse, the *rūpa* of the third day. One each day, there are twenty spaces to be filled, using suitable textual matter according to the *rūpa.*

Even more interesting for our purposes, other *rūpa*s emerge that are not simply based on words and syntax, but on turns of phrases and impressions, such as refrains, or groups of words, alliterations, and repetitions of words. Even words that are semantically associated can become a *rūpa:* the verbal root *sthā* becomes associated with an end, as well as the word *parama,* or supreme. So, too, words and forms associated with "multitude" are appropriate for the third day, and so on.

The tenth and final day is most intriguing, for in this we find mention of various ritual acts connected with mantras: the movement of priests around the *āhavanīya* fire; the movement of priests while bearing an *udumbara* (sacred wood) branch showing their intention to conquer the energy and essence of the sacrifice; the slithering motion that accompanies their recitation of the stanzas in honor of the queen of snakes. As Malamoud puts it, "Acts highlight words here . . . the act becomes nothing more than a means to miming what the words say. The connection between the two levels of rite is immediate — they signify one another."[45]

While Louis Renou saw in these applications of mantra the reason for the decline in knowledge of the Veda, Malamoud wants to argue that attention paid to form, such as *rūpa,* is still significant.[46] As he puts it, there is poetic significance in "the attention paid to words as forms of phonic materials, and also that given to the *rūpa*s, which the ritualists' analyses uncovered in words and in the arrangement of words. The violence done to the text by the rite, favoured and incited the birth of certain disciplines that were the glory of ancient India: these include, in our opinion, that of poetics."[47]

Renou's despair is Malamoud's hope for an incipient poetics, and the inspiration for *Bringing the Gods to Mind.* This book takes Malamoud's insight one step further: even the merest and most mechanical association implies a quality of experience, an orientation to being. Even the most mechanical set of applications of the word "first" will suggest that the rites of the first day may in fact be filled with a sense of beginning. What is more, the deities described in the recited mantra might be thought of in terms of their beginnings, for that is what is required when one brings the

deities to mind. And, of course, even the less numerical associations that Malamoud mentions, such as verb tense, would reinforce this: Would not the constant use of the present tense in a mantra help to create a sense of "present-ness" intrinsic to the second day of the rite? And so on. Finally, even the more semantic connections between act and mantra of the tenth day might also be present in the other, formal connections of the earlier days of the sacrifice, in so far as the deities brought to mind are the agents and actors of the verbs used. The deities are also described by the nouns with the formal properties of "first," "second," and so on. What we have here, then, is a poetics of numbers and of ordering.

Some of the *viniyoga*s in the Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras discussed here are arranged according to the numerical Brāhmaṇa schema that Malamoud outlines.[48] However, this does not prevent us from exploring the further semantic possibilities set up by an application of a mantra. Nor, clearly, did it stop the authors of the early Indian texts: the tenth day *dvādaśāha* applications, with their more semantic associations, also imply that one can have a variety of possible metonymic connections within the same rite, even, perhaps, within the same application of a mantra.

With the lens of metonymy, the mantras extracted from their poetic contexts are no longer, as Renou despaired, "the break up of the old hymns into formulae, and even fragments in turn impaled, like so many inert bodies, within the texture of the liturgy." These verses are the opposite of inert bodies; they are suggestive fragments, in the Benjaminian sense, that can allow imaginative vitality and possibility of an associative kind.

NOTE ON THE ROLE OF CONTEMPORARY ETHNOGRAPHY IN VEDIC SACRIFICE

Malamoud's mention of the declining knowledge of the Veda leads to a final, but important point—the role of contemporary context and Vedic reenactments. The reader will have noted that in the above example, the simple knowledge of the basics of an Indian wedding gave the interpreter much more knowledge about what might have been the connections between the mantra and the ritual context. The reader will also have noted by now that throughout the previous three chapters, I have occasionally referred to contemporary reenactments and some of their vicissitudes as performers negotiate between the Vedic texts that are their sources and their ritual situations (the uses of repetition, the uses of imaginative interpretation, and so on).

While it would be anachronistic to assume that Vedic reenactments of

the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries would be anything like what they were in the fourth century BCE, we can speculate that there may be certain kinds of associative dynamics that would be similar. Thus contemporary ethnography can give us some helpful "starting points." We use this information not to gain a sense of "what it was really like" in an Āśvalāyana household, but rather to gain a sense of what it was like to try to make linkages between mantra and ritual, and what may have been at stake at a human level, as one negotiated between the same words and the same ritual implements, three thousand years later.

As one theorist of performed poetry, R. A. York, puts it in his *The Poem as Utterance,* "One has to be aware not only of what is being done with the words, but the conditions of utterance that make it possible or desirable to do so."[49] Or, in the words of one sacrificer in Barsi, Maharashtra, India, "It's important to get into the students' minds the difference these verses make to their lives—why they would even *want* to do this." These are human conditions, and in addition to reading the texts of the sacrifice, one can also read the human texts in the contemporary world as they struggle with the same issues. In subsequent chapters I frequently refer to notes from visits in 1992 and 1999 to *mahāvrata* and Soma sacrifices in Maharashtra as kinds of "touchstones" with which to complete the imaginative task of *viniyoga.*

CONCLUSIONS

Our review of the idea of *viniyoga,* in both early India and in later Indological studies, shows a rich practice of hermeneutical interpretation between the spoken word and the ritual context. In early India, the focus was on bringing the knowledge of the gods to mind through the mantras, and the creation of pragmatic perspectives in which the goal of the ritual could be best achieved through the right placement of poetic images found in mantras. In Indological studies, this hermeneutic was seen as weak and unsystematic, a subjective practice that could yield nothing but historical data about the relationship between the *Ṛg Veda* and earlier Śrauta usage and later Gṛhya usage.

In contrast, our assumption here is that *viniyoga* is not a mathematically predictable interpretive principle; Indologists's expectations that it should be leads only to disappointment. Nor is *viniyoga* a "magical" principle; some Indologists' expectations that it should be leads to surprise that it is as systematic and patterned as it is. Jan Gonda saw the application of mantra as an "in-between" phenomenon that is not prop-

erly designated as magic nor properly designated as philosophically sysematic. *Viniyoga* exists in between these two spheres, as an associational or metonymic principle. It is much like the interpretations of a literary critic, or even sometimes like the spontaneous creativity of a dramatic performer. As such, it is rich in imaginative possibilities and imaginative executions. It is to that all-to-subjective and imperfect literary task of tracing those associations that we now turn.

PART TWO

The Case Studies

CHAPTER 4

Fire, Light, and Ingesting over Time

The digestive intuition is all-powerful.

Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*

For the ways of truth lead to Agni the noble-born one;
the pleasures of food follow him as a reward, from time immemorial.

Ṛg Veda 10.5.4

In the Vedic world, Indra is asked to consume food and beverages, hungry for more; Soma is the consumable drink par excellence, which is drunk not only by the gods but also by the poets. The food imagery of the *Ṛg Veda* becomes used in the Upaniṣads as representative of the emerging idea of a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; by the very nature of the images in the *Ṛg Veda,* the poems hint at this cyclicality. In the Śrauta world, food and its ingestion become topics of intense focus, as the sacrificial structure is built around it. And, in both the Śrauta and Gṛhya worlds, a whole new class of rites, called *pākayajña,* "simple sacrifices" or "sacrifices of cooking," emerge as ways of thinking about food.[1] As Charles Malamoud has emphasized, "Exalted in all its forms in Vedic poetry and speculation, food (considered in terms of its ingredients, preparation, rules of exchange, and consumption) becomes charged with a social and religious symbolism so powerful and complex that there is simply no end to the number of precautions that one may take with regard to it."[2]

As Malamoud goes on in his elegant essay, the Vedic brahmin is fundamentally a cooker, who, in sacrificing "cooks the world" *(lokapakti).* The śāstric rules of whom a brahmin may accept food from, when he may cook for others, and so on, are endless and seem to evolve from his role

as cooker of the world to the one who does the cooking for other people.[3] All that is oblatory belongs to the gods. Oblations in Vedic sacrifice must be cooked substances — both whatever is manifestly cooked by the sacrificer himself or by his officiants, before or during the ceremony. Even raw milk is cooked in advance, as milk is nothing other than the sperm of Agni, and all that comes from Agni is, by nature, cooked. So, too, the body of the victim itself is the object of an intensified cooking process.[4] Soma is mixed together with a cooked substance, usually milk, and parched grains. Soma is also ambiguous, in that it can be absorbed raw. Thus the texts emphasize that he who consumes Soma must also be cooked: he whose body has not been heated, the raw creature, does not attain to this [effect of the Soma drink]: only creatures cooked to a turn.[5]

Images of cooking and ingestion in the Vedic world are also compellingly associated with birth: ingestion, digestion, and gestation are significantly linked. The cooking of the sacrificer himself in his initiatory three days in the hut is compared to a kind of birth. The sacrificer is "cooked" in the process of becoming a *dīkṣā,* or consecrated, where he adopts the position of a foetus.[6] And, at the funeral rituals, the sacrificer's body is also a kind of actual oblation, in which his body is not to be devoured, but "prepared" for the world beyond, where the crematory fire will take him (*RV* 10.16.5). So, too, cooking is described as a kind of gestation. The sacrificial fire is compared to a womb in many Śrauta and Gṛhya texts; even the "cooker," the brahmin himself, is compared to a womb. To kill him and to kill a foetus become synonymous acts, as he becomes identified with the "womb" of the sacrificial fire.

Even the most basic of sacrifices, the *agnihotra,* where portions of boiled milk are offered into the fire and drunk by the sacrificer, might be best interpreted as a ritual where food is neutralized so that it is free for consumption. While some scholars have seen the *agnihotra* primarily as a solar rite, Heesterman makes a strong argument for the solar meaning being subservient:

> The materials for his food do not belong to man by right; it is, in other words, something inviolable or sacred. As a passage on the *agnihotra* says, "food belongs to the gods." And even of the gods it is said that those among them who are without sacrificing a bit of food in the fire disappeared. Appropriation and preparation of food are a violation of the sacred. . . . The need for food forces man to enter into violent contact with the sacred and to expose himself to the ominous consequences of his transgression. He can only neutralize these risks by. . . . abandoning a token part of the food by pouring it into the fire.[7]

Our own analysis of the *viniyoga*s will show the mutuality and inextricability of food and light as Vedic images; thus they help us to move

beyond one exclusive interpretation, whether it be solar or the digestive perspective.

In addition, the basic metaphor of the "sacrifice as food" changes depending on the ritual contexts. The *mahāvrata,* or winter equinox festival, is consistently called Prajāpati's "food." So, too, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 27–28, a challenge by the Śyāparṇas as to why they have been excluded from the sacrifice, evolves into a long discourse on food, and the sacrificial food proper to each of the four *varṇa*s. The goods of the sacrifice become the "food" of the sacrifice. In addition, in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* 4.9.14, the reviling of Prajāpati occurs at the end of the tenth day of the *mahāvrata* sacrifice. In this reviling, many of the bad things he created are recited, or perhaps the story of his incest is recounted. However, in the Ṛg Vedic Brāhmaṇas (*AB* 5.25; *KB* 27.5), the texts cease to blame Prajāpati, and instead give the names of his "bodies," which include the "eater of food" and "the mistress of food." Thus the controversial nature of the dialogue is eliminated in part through the image of food.[8]

All these ideas are important background for the images accompanying the act of ingestion itself. In the Vedic world, eating is in fact cooking, cooking through the heated body of the brahmin, who has absorbed the light of the sun and the sacrificial fire. The ideas that must anticipate and accompany the act of eating must be linked to the primordial acts of cooking. They must prepare us for the taking in and changing nature of what is about to take place.

ṚG VEDA 1.2–3: FOOD AND LIGHT

Hymns 1.2 and 1.3 are typical of this perspective on food: in nine verses, Vāyu, Indra, and Mitra-Varuṇa are asked to come and drink the offerings of Soma juice.[9] In addition, they are asked to bestow strength and action upon the worshiper in return. Hymn 1.3 is a similar pattern: in four triplets, four gods are addressed and asked to give their particular bounty in return for Soma juice. In the last triplet, Sarasvatī is praised as the goddess of speech and as the river goddess. How do these hymns travel as they move through Vedic history? In the Śrauta material, they are used in two different ways: in the *praüga-śastra* of the *agniṣṭoma,* and in the *abhiplava-ṣaḍaha.* What are the natures of these ceremonies?[10] As a *śastra,* or description of a rite, the *praüga* means the name of a second *śastra,* or set of hymns at the morning libation of the *agniṣṭoma* rite, the basic Soma sacrifice. Seven triplets culled from *Ṛg Veda* 1.2 and 1.3 thus make up part of the chant that accompanies the *ājya,* or morning offering of ghee. It might be best thought of as a kind of seven-part "ritual of

the morning," in which Agni consumes the butter, and Soma is being prepared to be consumed by the priests and the gods. The *praüga śastra* is a prelude to eating that contains the images of eating and of processing that which is eaten through the use of light.

Each of these seven parts is marked by a verse that comes before each of the triplets, a kind of poetic "preface" called a *puroruc nivid*. *Puroruc nivid*s are small verses inserted before the main triplets of the *Ṛg Veda* are recited. *Puroruc* literally means "shining in front," and thus each of the triplets has a smaller verse that "shines" in front of it, as a kind of prologomena of light. To put it another way, each of these Ṛg Vedic triplets needs to be polished with a preceding verse, as one would polish a vase with a cloth, before it can shine properly. This kind of imagery speaks to the materiality of the Vedic hymns, the ways that they are perceived as objects that shed light, as well as utterances that spread auspicious sounds.

Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra 7.10.9 is particularly explicit in its usage of these hymns.[11] Here, in total, are the *puroruc*s, or verses surrounded and polished by light and performed especially at the *praüga śastra*.

> 7.10.9. Having recited once, "May Vāyu, who goes in front, who delights in the sacrifice, come together with the mind, he the benevolent one with his benevolent team," [the hotṛ] recites the three verses (the first three times): "1.Vāyu! Come here, beautiful one; these Soma drinks are ready. Drink of it, elevate your reputation! 2. Vāyu! With poems of praise the singers sing to you during the squeezed Soma, aware of the time. 3. Vāyu! Your voice comes to make more for the giver of the sacrifice, make them wide in order to drink Soma." (*RV* 1.2.1–3)
>
> 7.10.10. [The *hotṛ* recites,] "The two heroes of golden path, the Gods, the masters, (may come) to (our) assistance, the vigorous Vāyu and Indra," then follow the three verses: 4. "Indra and Vāyu! Here are the squeezed drinks; come with joy, for the Soma juices are desiring you. 5. Vāyu and Indra! You know about the squeezed drinks, you rich in gains. Thus come quickly here. 6. Vāyu and Indra! Come to the meeting place of the ones squeezing Soma, quickly, according to the wish, you lords!" (*RV* 1.2.4–6)
>
> 7.10.11. Now the third verse, shining before, "The two wise, the kings, are through the intelligence of mental power, in (our) dwelling, the two-enemy destroyers in the abode," [and then] the [three verses of] the *praüga śastra:* 7. "I call Mitra, of pure power and Varuṇa, consuming in force, let both enjoy the soothing poem. 8. Through the truth, you, Mitra and Varuṇa, you increasers of truth, caretakers of truth, have received high regard. 9. Both seers, Mitra and Varuṇa, of a strong manner, with a wide dwelling, give us skillful effectiveness." (*RV* 1.2.7–9)

7.10.12. Now the fourth verse, shining forth, "Come here you divine *adhvaryu*s, with your gold-clad chariot. The two of you salve this sacrifice with sweetness," (and then) the three verses: "1. Aśvins! Have a desire after the comforts accompanied by the sacrificial prayers, you nimble-handed masters of beauty, you useful ones! 2. Aśvins, lords rich in art, with superior understanding, listen with focused minds, to our praises. 3. The Soma drinks of the sacrificer belong to you, you master of Nāsatyas who dwells near the sacrificial grass. Come here, so that the way of Rudra transforms you." (*RV* 1.3.1–3)

7.10.13. Then the fifth verse shining forth, "Indra is most gracious through praises and the lord of bounty; the one with the bay (steeds); the friend of the pressed Soma," [and then] the three [verses of the *śastra* proper]: "4. Indra! Come here, you brightly shining one, these Soma drinks desire you, that are purified in a vessel by tender (fingers). 5. Indra! Come here, spurred on by our poetry, rushed here by those who control speech, to the edifying words of the priest who has prepared Soma. 6. Indra! Come here, hurrying to the edifying words, you joiner of tawny horses, have a desire for our Soma!" (*RV* 1.3.4–6)

7.10.14. Then the sixth verse shining forth, "We call at this sacrifice all the gods united together; may they come all to this sacrifice, the gods with , for drinking the Soma, they who are the manifestation of the sacrifice," [and then] the three verses of the *śastra* proper: "7. Protecting preservers of people, All-Gods, come here, as givers of Soma of the worshiper. 8. All-Gods, you come rushing quickly over the waters to Soma, as the cows to the fresh pasture. 9. All-Gods, without flaws, welcome, and [we are unhappy to see them leave]; without fault may the leaders of the chariot enjoy the juice of life." (*RV* 1.3.7–9)

7.10.15a. Then the seventh verse shining forth, "By the voice we call the mighty Goddess voice, Sarasvatī, the well adorned, to this sacrifice," and then the three [verses]: "10. May pure Sarasvatī, rich in rewards, desire our sacrifice, that gains treasures through wisdom. 11.Appreciating gifts, taking in good wishes, Sarasvatī has accepted the sacrifice. 12. With your banner, Sarasvatī unleashes the great floods of water; she rules all [pious] thoughts" [*RV* 1.3.10–12]. With these last of the three repeated verses he closes the *śastra*. Then he mutters [the formula called] the "Strength of the *śastra*": "Quicken my word. Satisfy my breath. Protect my eye. Favor my ear. Bestow on me color. Protect my body. Give me glory! The *śastra* has been uttered!"

What is the picture that is painted of the ritual use of food, or more particularly the consumption of Soma, in this morning litany? First, it is clear and quite poetically compelling to see the ways in which the verses of the Vedic hymn are intensified, indeed polished, by the "verses shining before," the *puroruc*s. Each of the polishing verses give a kind of general

statement about the essence of the deity being invoked before he or she is actually invoked. Thus one has a sense of the nature of who is about to arrive. This is also common in many prayers before meals, such as the Shabbat prayer over the bread, "Blessed are you O God, Creator of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth." In an imaginative context, it is important to stress creator of the Universe as God's essence, as a kind of preface to his act of bringing forth bread from the earth. So, too, these verses work in a similar fashion; before he is invoked, Indra is described as most gracious lord of bounty and friend of Soma. Even the All-Gods are spoken of as the manifestation of the sacrifice in its own right before they are invoked.

In addition, we see a progression, in *Ṛg Veda* 1.2 and 1.3, of different deities invoked in order for the process of consumption to take place: first to Vāyu, then to Indra and Vāyu, and then to Mitra and Varuṇa. The wind is the transmitter of the Soma juice, as well as its consumer. Indra and Vāyu together are representative of manly vigor, as communicated by verse 6, and the bestower of waters upon the earth. Mitra and Varuṇa are the dispensers of water — causing rain by producing evaporation. The next foods invoked are more associated with Sūrya, the sun god: the Aśvins are the two sons of the sun born during his taking shape as a horse. Indra is invoked next; he has two horses that ride across the sky, and then the All-Gods, who are both bestowers of rain and solar gods, are called forth. The final divinity, speech, or Sarasvatī, is the capstone of the hymn, the blesser of speech at the end of the *uktha,* or that which is uttered, in the Soma libation.

To take a Vedic ritualist perspective, the Agni-Indra-Viśvadevas-Sarasvatī order of the final part of the hymn actually reflects the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa's* order of the twelve-day Soma sacrifice. In the first four crucial days of this sacrifice, these same deities are invoked in this exact same order as *Ṛg Veda* 1.3, a deity for each day. The Brāhmaṇas concomittantly attach a *varṇa,* more or less consistently, as another "marker" for each day: the brahmin for the first, the *kṣatriya* for the second day dedicated to Indra, the *vaiśya* for the third, multiple and fecund All-God oblations, and the transcendent "word" or Sarasvatī/Vāc for the fourth day.[12]

Yet these hymns are only a partial reflection of the Brāhmaṇa order; many other deities, such as Mitra-Varuṇa and Vāyu, are also involved. Thus larger groups of associations are possible in these prayers before consumption — one that might be reflective of the entire cosmic process itself. Even while the hymn reflects this earlier structure, there is still a

very intriguing set of themes related to the issues of consuming, the relationship between light and ingestion.

We see in this general litany a movement from gods related to wind and water, to gods related to Agni and the sun, to Indra, to the All-Gods, to the goddess of speech. The consumption of Soma is reflected in the cycle of rain and sun, which then culminates in speech, the ultimate mover of the natural cycle according to the Vedic worldview. In a kind of step-by-step process, in which each verse is polished before it is presented, the image of consuming Soma is invoked slowly. Here, one is reminded of the grace before meals in which all the contributors to the meal are blessed — the farmers, the shopkeepers, the cooks, and so on. In the Vedic case, these contributors just happen to be divine.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (2.165–66), however, speech itself, in the form of mantra, is the mover.[13] It is one among many of the hymns that one should recite before the noonday meals, and if one recites this, then one obtains from all objects of desire and one gets rid of all sins. The main point of the *Ṛg Vidhāna* passage is to show that these same cosmic images must be referred to, and muttered, before eating. The individual eater, then, is the one who metonymically relates himself to the cosmic cycle of water, sun, and speech. Moreover, the verse is said to remove all sins. As a result, the individual eater is the one who is purified, not the entire group of Soma ritual participants, before ingesting the food. Viewed historically, then, it is as if in the later Vedic literature, the individual eater becomes the *substitute for* the Soma sacrifice, which reflects the larger passage of food throughout the universe. In the Śrauta Sūtra rite, the entire, communal process of preparing and ingesting the food is linked to the prototypes who prepare and ingest — the divinities. In the Vidhāna rite, the person who prepares and ingests links only himself with those same divinities.

ṚG VEDA 1.22: THE THREE STRIDES OF EATING

The earliest reference to Viṣṇu's "three steps" (*RV* 1.22.17–21) emerges with a fascinating ritual history concerning eating.[14] Here are the images contained in the hymn:

> 1.22.17. Viṣṇu crossed this; three times he planted his foot, and the whole was collected in his dust;
>
> 1.22.18. Viṣṇu, the preserver, the uninjurable, stepped three steps, and upholding dharmic deeds.

> 1.22.19. See the doings of Viṣṇu, through which vows are fulfilled. He is a worthy friend of Indra.
>
> 1.22.20. The wise ones continually focus on that supreme place of Viṣṇu, like the eye that ranges over the sky.
>
> 1.22.21. The wise, always watching, always diligent in praise, fully glorify the supreme place of Viṣṇu.

This hymn is famous for its status as "antecedent" to the mythology of three-striding Viṣṇu, *Viṣṇu trikrama*. The imagery here is of Viṣṇu's global significance, gathering up the dust of the earth as he strides and, through his strides, upholding the sacred order of the world. The three strides, like the eye ranging over the sky, seem to identify Viṣṇu with the sun, and the wise sacrificers watch the path of the sun as they identify his "place" in the sky. It is important to note here that no mention is made of the contest with King Bali and the dwarf, as is discussed in later Purāṇic mythology. His three steps have been interpreted as the three mountains—Samarohana (eastern mountain); Viṣṇupada (the meridian sky); and Gayasuras (the western mountain)—upon which he lights, thus following the path of the sun.[15] In addition, his three steps could have been interpreted as earth, atmosphere, and heaven.

Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra 6.1 includes this hymn in the offering of the *iḍā*, or riceball, in the *darśapūrṇamāsa,* the basic offering. These are part of the larger recitation of the *puronuvākyā*s. The rite that follows is of real interest for our present metonymic perspectives: the sacrificer causes the two upper parts of his forefinger to be buttered and cleanses his fingers, then touches water in order to purify himself. He accepts the *iḍā* with folded hands, transferring it into the left hand and right hand facing northward. The text then states clearly that he should take the second *iḍā* between his thumb and other fingers; having caught and pulled the *iḍā* that has been received with the thumb and pulled it back with his fingers, he holds the *iḍā* to his right at the level of the mouth or heart and invokes a mantra.

The imagery of the thumb here is an interesting one. The metonymic link seems to revolve around the idea of Viṣṇu planting his foot, around which the whole was collected (verse 1), and the sacrificer planting his thumb, around which the whole offering of the *iḍā* is collected. Moreover, the ritual seems to revolve around two groups of three: one group is buttering, cleansing, and touching water; the second group is accepting the two *iḍā*s and saying the mantra. Viṣṇu is a prototype, and thus the *darśapūrṇamāsa* sacrificer might also identify with him. (*ŚŚS*

[1.8.8] also mentions this hymn; it is the *puronuvākyā,* or inviting verse, for Viṣṇu at the beginning of the morning Soma sacrifice, just as it is in the Āśvalāyana school.)

In *Śaṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 5.26, the hymn is used in a kind of consecration of ponds. Significantly, plunging into the water follows the consecration. The plunging is a kind of mimesis, or parallel act, of taking the food with the thumb as shown in the Śrauta Sūtra material. The thumb takes the plunge in the regular *darśapūrṇamāsa* rite, an act of "everyday" eating. So, too, the body takes the plunge in the act of consecrating the pond, collecting the pond around himself. Viṣṇu also plunges across the world in his striding and provides the model act that can be imitated.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (1.87–88), the hymn is uttered as the eater plunges his thumb into the food before he eats.[16] The hymn also expiates the sin of eating forbidden food. In the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* the individual ritual of eating replaces the public act of offering the *iḍā.* So, too, the *iḍā* as public food is replaced as public food by the individually chosen food of the eater. In the logic of this application, the *iḍā* may even, in fact, be replaced by the forbidden food that the eater has chosen, so long as harm of the forbidden food is counteracted by the mantra!

On a larger scale, the striding of Viṣṇu is the metonymic mirror of the act of grasping with the hand and inserting a thumb into food: these two images refer to each other, as is typical of metonymic constructions. The three strides are linked to the covering of the world by Viṣṇu, a kind of grasping in circular motion with the entire body. So, too, the hand is grasping the food in a circular motion, beginning with the plunging of the thumb into the food and its encirclement with the hand in order to eat.

In this mutually referential relationship, then, Viṣṇu becomes a kind of "eater" of the world in his striding motion, just as the brahmin eater becomes the "encircler" of the world in his grasping hand-motions of consumption. Moreover, *Ṛg Veda* 1.22.17 describes Viṣṇu planting his foot into the world and the world being collected in the dust. So, too, the act of "plunging" the thumb into the food and gathering it around one's hand mirrors Viṣṇu's foot plunging into the world, gathering the dust of the world around itself.

ṚG VEDA 1.187: WORSHIPING FOOD

While the two previous hymns were used in rituals anticipating eating, in *Ṛg Veda* 1.187, we find a hymn to food itself.[17] Intriguingly, the hymn is

not used in any of the ritual texts where consumption is so crucial. Food is invoked to protect the worshiper. It is Pitu, called *annadevatā* by commentators, and is characterized as the upholder. Food thus allowed Trita (here, a name of Indra) to kill Vṛtra. Food is also a source of delight, whose favors are diffused throughout the regions, who has men as its relishers "with stiff necks," and who is asked to accompany the coming of the waters. In the rest of the hymn, the body is asked to "grow fat," accompanied by the enjoyment of Soma, boiled milk or barley, and a vegetable cake of fried meal, who is a sacrificial cow yielding butter for the oblation:

> 1.187.1. I wish now to praise Food, the powerful preserver of strength through which Trita tore Vṛtra apart.
>
> 1.187.2. Good-tasting Food, Sweet Food, we have chosen you. Be our helpers.
>
> 1.187.3. Come to us, Food, friendly with your friendly help, as a joyous, not quarrelsome friend, as affectionate, unambiguous.
>
> 1.187.4. Your juices, Food, are spread through the regions; they extend to heaven like the wind.
>
> 1.187.5. Your gifts, Food, these are those who enjoy you, Sweetest Food, the enjoyers of your juices come forward like strong-necked ones.
>
> 1.187.6. With you, Food, is the meaning of the great gods. That which is beautiful has been accomplished in your sign. With your aid, [Indra] has slain the dragon.
>
> 1.187.7. When each morning shimmer of the mountains has arrived, Food, then you should come sent to us here, beautiful Food, for pleasure.
>
> 1.187.8. When we taste the abundance of water, and of plants, then you, friend of Vāta, should become fat.
>
> 1.187.9. When we, Soma, enjoy from you, that mixed with milk and with barley, then you, friend of Vāta, should become fat.
>
> 1.187.10. Become, O plant, groats, fat, kidneys that enliven the senses, then you, friend of Vāta, should become fat.
>
> 1.187.11. We have made you, Food, tasty with speeches as the distributers of sacrifices make the cows. We have made you the gods for the common meal, you for us, for the common meal.

Notice here that food is a deity as well as Soma, linking the two quite clearly in the chain of Vedic consumption. Food is itself the meaning of the gods and the strength of Indra to slay his enemy (6).

While this hymn to food has no public ritual uses, it has "private" uses in the *Ṛg Vidhāna* text (1.145–148ab).[18]

> 1.145. One should often worship the food which is served with the hymn beginning with *pitum ni,* and should often honor and eat that food which is not despised.
>
> 1.146. For him there can be no disease arising from food, even poison is reduced to a consumable state. One should mutter this hymn which is destructive of poison after having drunk poison.
>
> 1.147. And one should not eat while one is unrestrained in speech, nor when one is impure, nor [eat] disgusting food, and on becoming pure one should always give food, honor it and offer oblations.
>
> 1.148ab. For him there can be no fear whatsoever from hunger; one will not suffer any disease arising out of food.

Thus in the later Vedic period, *Ṛg Veda* 1.187 is a kind of prophylactic hymn, in which all the anxieties arising from food are dissolved: disease, hunger, and poison both before and after eating. Notice, in *Ṛg Vidhāna* 147, the rules surrounding food: one should be unrestrained in speech, be bodily pure, and make sure the right food is in a consumable state. While in the hymn itself, food itself is the life-giving agent, it is the personal anxieties *about* food that are taken care of by its being recited in the later Vedic ritual.

ṚG VEDA 7.1: FIRE AND DIGESTION

We also find food directly referred to in one or two verses in *Ṛg Veda* 7.1.[19] The hymn is a long song of devotion to Agni, filled with the common bequests to Agni to bestow wealth and wisdom, and brave sons and to save the worshipers from pain and sickness.

> 7.1. Men created Agni by their great concentration, with hand movement from matches, the appropriate, far-gleaming lord of the home, those capable with arrows.
>
> 7.2. The Vasus placed this Agni into the home for protection, who was beautiful to look at, the one who put people at peace, who was always at home.
>
> 7.3. Agni charmingly illuminated us ahead, with an inextinguishable column of fire, youngest one. Many people come to honor you.
>
> 7.4. These Agnis flame more beautifully than the (other) Agnis, as glowing masters, with whom noble lords sit together.

7.5. Give us, Agni, according to our wishes, an appropriate treasure for masters, good children, powerful one, whom a sorcerer has never overcome.

7.6. The understanding one, whom the virgin, the butter ladle, approaches evenings and mornings with the sacrificial offering and wishing good to the respect owed to him.

7.7. Burn, Agni, all enemies with the same flame, with which you burned the Jarūtha. Make the illness disappear silently.

7.8. The one who flames your countenance, oh Agni, the best, the bright, the illuminating, pure; through these speeches of praise may you also be (well disposed) to us here.

7.9. Mortal men, the fathers and leaders of rites, have spread your countenance to many places, Agni, through these [praises] may you also be well disposed to us here.

7.10. These brave men should be superior to all godless deceptions in battles, who acknowledge my appropriate poem.

7.11. Let us not have men lacking in children, nor sit around you without heirs, from a lack of sons, Agni, but rather in a house filled with children, friend of the home.

7.12. To the one to whom the warrior constantly comes as a sacrifice, (give) us a dwelling abundant with children, with good descendants, who increase through physically new generations.

7.13. Protect us, Agni, from our disagreeable enemy, protect us from the falseness of the miser desiring evil! Let me overcome the attackers successfully.

7.14. This Agni is to surpass the other Agnis, with whom a victorious, affectionate son with a strong hand and the speech bringing a thousandfold nourishment unite.

7.15. This is the Agni, who protects from the envious one, who is to liberate from his need the one who sets the fire. Noble men pay their respects.

7.16. This Agni is anointed in many places (with butter) that the capable one inflames among sacrifices, that the wood transforms during the sacrifice.

7.17. To you, Agni, we intend, each according to our ability, to sacrifice the many constant sacrifices; during the sacrificial meal, we prepare the festivities again and again.

7.18. May these most pleasant sacrifices go to the group of gods without fading, Agni! They are to complement our fragrant gifts.

> 7.19. Do not abandon us to lack of sons, Agni, nor to bad clothing, do not give us over to hunger or demons, Practicer of Truth! You should not lead us astray either at home and in the woods.
>
> 7.20. Now teach us correctly the forms of sacred knowledge, Agni; make them agreeable to the sacrificial sponsor, God! We wish to share on both sides of your gift. Always give us your blessing!
>
> 7.21. You, Agni, are easy to call, of joyous sight, illuminate with a beautiful light, son of power! You should not lack your own dear son, we should not be without a manly son.
>
> 7.22. Do not accuse us with bad care during this god-ignited fire, Agni. We should not encounter lack of mercy, son of power, as a result of our impatience.[20]
>
> 7.23. The mortal one, beautiful Agni, is rich, the one in you, to the immortal one the sacrifice offers. He makes that one the winner of goodness among the gods, the one to whom the rich donor comes, questioning with concern.
>
> 7.24. Agni, since you know our great well being, give our donors great wealth, so that even we can be made divine as masters, undiminished, powerful one!
>
> 7.25. Now teach us correctly the forms of sacred knowledge, Agni; make them agreeable to the sacrificial sponsor, God! We wish to share on both sides of your gift. Always give us your blessing!

The hymn is all-encompassing in tone; almost all of the gifts that one can imagine asking for in the Vedic world are asked for in its verses. While only verse 19 directly addresses the issue of food, in its pleading to Agni to keep the worshiper away from hunger, almost all of the sacrificial riches and wealth mentioned throughout the hymn would involve food. It might well be this all-encompassing quality that informs its usage in the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (8.7; 10.2) where it is used as part of the Viśvajit and Caturvīra sacrifices. What is the Viśvajit sacrifice? Its name means "all-conquering," and it occurs on the twentieth day in the larger *sattra,* or gathering of the *agniṣṭoma* sacrifice. In keeping with its name, the *dakṣiṇa,* or gift, here, is very large: one hundred horses, one thousand heads of cattle, or one's entire property.[21]

Ṛg Veda 7.1 accompanies the *ājya* litany, the offering of melted butter poured into a pot covered with two *pavitra*s and melted on the burning embers of the *gārhapatya.* It is not surprising that a major hymn to Agni would be the main litany for the *ājya.* Agni, as we know, is the god with "melted butter on his back" (*RV* 1.1). The hymn also consists of

the *ājya,* or melted-butter litany, in the *caitraratha* sacrifice, performed by one with a desire to attain plenitude in food (*ĀŚS* 10.2.18). Here, the overall frames of both ritual contexts show the metonymic linkages. The "all-conquering" goal of the Viśvajit sacrifice would include the goal of plentitude of food, thus making those verses appropriate. They are even more specifically appropriate in the *caitraratha* sacrifice, where the whole goal is food, and thus verse 10 would be the most relevant of the entire hymn.

According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* this hymn is recited as part of the morning litany of the *mahāvrata,* the winter solstice sacrifice. The two animals to be slaughtered, the he-goat for Prajāpati and a bull for Indra, are then processed to their various places in the sacrificial arena. Then hymn 7.1 is recited, here too as part of the *ājya* melted-butter offering. It is not surprising that this hymn would be part of a sacrificial offering where one has just increased one's food a great deal.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* text, the hymn to Agni is included in a number of different hymns to be recited before meals (*RV* 1.1–3; 10.1–5; 10.186–91; 7.1; 8.32–45). What is interesting here is that, according to the late Vedic tradition, the first three hymns (*RV* 1.1–3), the last six hymns (*RV* 10.186–91), and the hymns in the "middle" of the text (*RV* 8.32–45) concern the subject of food. In my discussion of the *viniyoga* of these hymns with one Vedic sacrificer, he observed that this structure of hymns reflects the same structure of how the stomach is lined in digestion, according to the Vedic perspective: first the top lining of the stomach, then its bottom lining, and then the middle contents.[22] He went on to comment that the stomach is also analogized to the three worlds, the three sacrificial fires, and so on.

Ṛg Vidhāna 2.167 continues, "The highest accomplishment of an object belongs to the one who regularly mutters this sacred speech, of the great sages among men, in the forenoon before his meal."[23] Thus, the imagery of completion and encirclement is also present here, both in the design of the Ṛg Vedic hymns that are muttered and in the processing of food itself. The stomach is analogous to the canon, and the two ends and the middle of the canon represent the completeness of it. So, too, the imagery is parallel with the completeness of the world and the completeness of the consuming body. Again reminding us of the connection between light and ingestion, Agni is the agent that creates the physical as well as the poetic processes of digestion.

ṚG VEDA 10.1–5: FIRE, EATING, AND DAWN

The next set of Ṛg Vedic hymns (10.1–5) involve consumption in a way quite similar to the cosmic processes of hymns 1.1 and 1.2.[24]

10.1.1. Even before the dawn he has gotten up; emerging from the darkness, he has arrived with his light. Agni with the bright light, with beautiful limbs/penis, has just by birth filled all dwelling places.

10.1.2. You are born as the child of both worlds, Agni, as the beloved, [you] distributed yourself among the plants. As a prodigy, you have overcome the darkness, the nights. Bellowing, you have emerged from your mother.

10.1.3. Knowing, as Viṣṇu does there his highest place, the one born, the high one, protects the third birthplace. When they have prepared with their mouths the milk belonging to him, then they honor him here all together.

10.1.4. Then the ones bringing nourishment come to you, the one growing by means of food. You return to them again when they have adopted another form. You are the sacrifice priest among the groups of humans.

10.1.5. [The worshipers see] the *hotṛ* with the wonderful chariot, the brightly colored banner of each sacrifice, the Agni, who is just as filled with his greatness as any god; because he stands first, however, he is the guest of people.

10.1.6. Now, nevertheless, Agni is to come, dressed in decorative clothing in the center of the earth. O King, born red, you may honor here in the place of comfort, as a fully empowered one, the gods here.

10.1.7. For you, Agni, have gone through heaven and earth, both at every time, as the son goes away from his parents. Go forth to the ones who are asking for you, youngest one, and lead the gods here, you powerful one!

10.2.1. Satisfy the demanding gods, youngest one; knowing the right times for sacrifice, you lord of the times, sacrifice here! Whoever the divine sacrifice priests are, you are together with those, Agni, you are the best asker among the *hotṛ*s.

10.2.2. You advocate the *hotṛ* and *potṛ* office for people. You are the one who notices, the one who distributes treasures who holds to the law. When we want to accomplish the sacrifice under the calling of Svāhā, god Agni as the worthy one is to honor the gods.

10.2.3. We have gone the way of the gods, as much as we can, to bring [them] before us. Agni is the knowledgeable one, he is to sacrifice; he alone is the *hotṛ,* he is to distribute the sacrifices, to distribute the times.

10.2.4. O Gods, if we, who are unknowing, were to omit your commandments, those of the knowing, then may the knowing Agni make all that good again according to the times in which he will distribute among the gods.

10.2.5. What the mortals have from unity in their hearts, in their weak understanding, and so cannot value the sacrifice, Agni should find that out, the counseling *hotṛ,* and then as the best sacrificer, sacrifice to the gods according to the custom of the times.

10.2.6. For the producer has produced you as symbol and the conspicuous sign of recognition of all sacrifices. As such, as for places to dwell that are populated, that are enviable joys of food along with cattle, sufficient for everyone!

10.2.7. Heaven and earth, and the waters, and Tvaṣṭṛ the creator of good things has created you; that you know for certain. Bright Agni, as you go the way created by the fathers, may you illuminate when you are inflamed!

10.3.1. The powerful steed-hitcher is inflamed, O king; the one like Rudra has now appeared in his power after an easy birth. Knowingly he glows in a high glow; he comes to the bright colored [Uṣas], driving away the black night.

10.3.2. If he in a metamorphosis crept through the black, brightly-colored [night], producing the young wife, the child of the great father, so the linker of the sky lights up with the Vasus in that he supports the raised beam of Sūrya.

10.3.3. The one worthy of praise has come in accompaniment with the praised [Uṣas]; her paramour, he goes behind his sister. Agni expands with the days, promised to be fortunate; with his bright colors, he has mastered the darkness.

10.3.4. His companions, the likewise loud calls of the good friend inflame Agni, of the great bull with the beautiful mouth — his rays have appeared as darkness with the arrival [of the night].

10.3.5. The one whose rays become pure like the sounds when the sky [height] glows, who brings the beautiful day, that one reaches the sky with the most magnificent, sharpest, playing, highest lights.

10.3.6. His powers sound whenever his iron wheels are shown, when he pants with his horses, with the ancient, brightly-colored, singing [flames], glowing like hitchers of steeds, the most divine unfolds.

10.3.7. As such, he brings us great things here and made you as the hitcher of the youthful heaven and earth! May Agni come here quickly with the well-harnessed steeds, the impetuous one with the impetuous ones.

10.4.1. I consecrate you, I dedicate this poem to you, as you are to be praised in our entreaties. Ancient King, you are like a drink in the desert, O Agni, for Pūru who has a craving.

10.4.2. Around whom people move as cattle around the warm stock of cattle, youngest one. You are the messenger of the gods and of the mortals. You, the great one, go between heaven and earth with your radiance.

10.4.3. As a child born at home raises you [to adulthood], your mother carries you loyally. You come longingly from your origin to this path; like an animal that has been set free you wish to gain the way.

10.4.4. We fools do not understand your greatness, you clever, understanding Agni; you alone understand it. His cloak is there, he goes eating with his tongue; as the lord licks, he [kisses] zealously the youthful female.

10.4.5. Wherever it may be, he is born anew from the old; the one who has become gray stands in the wood with the smoke as a flag. As one who does not swim, he avoids the water like the bull that the people lead unanimously to the altar.

10.4.6. Like two robbers going through the woods who risk their lives, [both arms] have bound firmly the matches with 10 cords. This most recent poetry is for you, Agni; hitch your chariot likewise with your flaming limbs.

10.4.7. Dedication and bowing and these speeches of praise should always serve you, Jātavedas, as strength. Protect, O Agni, our descendants, protect also our bodies incessantly.

10.5.1. The one ocean, the bearer of wealth, the much-producing one, speaks from our heart. It pursues the udder in the lap of both hidden ones. In the [original] source, the trace of the bird is hidden.

10.5.2. Hiding in the common nest, the horny buffaloes have come together with the mares. The seers protect the evidence from the truth; they have encased their greatest designations in a secret.

10.5.3. Both, who have a craving for truth and nevertheless are capable of metamorphosis have come together. They formed and produced the little one and raised him, the navel of all that which moves and remains firm, cutting with care the thread even of the seer.

10.5.4. For the ways of the truth lead to the noble born one, the pleasures of food follow him from time immemorial as a reward. Heaven and earth, adorned in their external clothing, were strengthened with fat, food, and sweets.

10.5.5. The knowing one, full of desire, fetched the seven red sisters from the sweetness for viewing. The one born earlier remained in the air; seeking a hiding place, he found that of Pūṣan.

10.5.6. The poets have created seven cupboards; the narrowed one (?) reached one of these. The column of Āyu is in the nest of the highest one, at the end of the paths on firm foundations.

> 10.5.7. The non-being and the being is in the highest area of heaven, in the lap of Aditi. Agni, truly, is for us the first-born of the law in the earliest age and the steer who is also a cow.

These hymns are short enough to reproduce here as a meditation on the spreading of sunlight and its conversion into food. In these hymns, Agni has a "bright body" who fills all beings with light as soon as he is born. He dwells among the plants and is the augmenter of food. He protects children, fixes the right, corrects faults; men have recourse to him as cattle do to a stall; they raise the wood to him with ten fingers like ten thieves harnessing a victim in the wood; he roars with his loud flames like thundering steeds, and he regulates the seasons and protects the all-sustaining foods of the earth.

According to the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 4.13, as well as *Śāṅkhyāna Śrauta Sūtra* 6.4.5, these five hymns are part of the *prātaranuvāka* rite. This is a highly mysterious rite, which is related to the rising of the sun, but uttered in the dead of night. Called "the morning litany," it is recited by the *hotṛ* in the last part of the night preceding the day *(Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra).* After offering an *ājya* oblation, the *hotṛ* sits between the yokes of the two *havirdhāna* carts, the carts designed to bring the food of the oblation, the Soma. He starts the recitation, which consists of three sections. Through a gradual modulation of the voice the recitation passes upward through the seven tones of the deep scale.[25]

The description of the rite comprises a compelling portrait: the hymn is recited after a ghee offering, and the carts that carry the food Soma "frame" the recitation as it rises upward in sound. The *havirdhāna* is the oblation receptacle, where the Soma plant is placed the day before it is pressed. Thus the *hotṛ* is standing in anticipation of both food and sunrise. Moreover, in his chanting, the *hotṛ* is, in effect, mirroring the rising sun with his rising voice, much of it in anticipation of the bounteous, darkness-breaking splendor of the sun. Once again, the situation of word and gesture create mutually referential metonymy, where rising voice and rising sun mirror each other, the cart and the song to Agni are both protectors of food.

Again, in the *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.167, this hymn is one among the several that comprise the litany of the individual eater before any meal. Thus the *hotṛ* as anticipator of the cosmic movement of the planets has become the individual eater anticipating the nourishment of his individual meal.

Ṛg Veda 10.30: Finding Water in the Desert

The hymn to the waters, *Ṛg Veda* 10.30, is also ritually applied to create an elegant set of mutually referential metonymies.[26]

10.30.1. The way to the festive speech should go "god-wards," to the waters, as upon its [own] incentive of the spirit, to the great creation of Mitra and Varuṇa. For the river streaming widely, I would like to have the appropriate song of praise.

10.30.2. So stop, then, you Adhvaryus, ready for the distribution of the sacrifice; go in a desiring manner to the desiring waters upon which the red eagle looks down! May this wave be seized today, you dexterous ones!

10.30.3. Adhvaryus! Go to the water, to the sea, honor the Apām Napāt with sacrifice. May he give you today the purified wave, for him squeeze the sweet Soma!

10.30.4. The one who illuminates the water without a match, whom the speech-givers call during the sacrifice, Apām Napāt, may you give the sweet water, through which Indra is strengthened to heroic power!

10.30.5. Go to the waters, Adhvaryus, pleased with the Soma and excited as the bachelor is excited by beautiful young women! If you will fill them, then you should purify them with plants!

10.30.6. The maidens likewise subject themselves to the young man when he longingly comes to the longing ones. They are in agreement; in their hearts, they agree: the Adhvaryus, the Dhiṣana [praise], and the divine waters.

10.30.7. Send your sweet, god-intoxicating wave, you waters for this Indra, to the one who created freedom for you who were enclosed, who saved you from great disgrace.

10.30.8. Send your sweet wave to him who is your child, you rivers [and] who carries on his back the source of sweetness, [the wave], the butter, the ones to be called to the sacrifice. You rich waters, listen to my call!

10.30.9. You rivers, send this intoxicating wave drunk by Indra, that stimulates both [worlds], the one excited by frenzy, gained by the Uśāna [plant], born of clouds, the threefold changing source!

10.30.10. Those who move in two streams as the ones fighting for cows, going all together, this mother and [female] ruler of the world, praise the waters, *ṛṣi,* the dear sisters who grew up together!

10.30.11. Speed up the sacrifice for our worship service, speed up the word of blessing to win the prize of victory! Open your udders with the use of the pious custom, be well-disposed to us, you waters!

> 10.30.12. You rich water, because you rule over the good and bring good advice for the balsam of life, and since you are the female lords of the treasure with good progeny, so Sarasvatī should bring the singer such strength.

> 10.30.13. Because the arriving waters have become visible, bringing butter, milk, honey, united in heart with the Adhvaryus, bringing Indra well-squeezed Soma.

> 10.30.14. These rich waters that bring happiness to the living have now arrived. Put them down, Adhvaryus, you companions; place them on the sacred grass, you worthy of Soma, in agreement with Apām Napāt.

> 10.30.15. The waters have happily come to this sacred grass; they have sat down, desiring god. Adhvaryus, squeeze the Soma for Indra! The worship servicehas now easily been made for you.

In *Ṛg Veda* 10.30, the Soma is asked to approach the celestial waters like alacrity of mind and offer abundant food (1–3).[27] The priests are asked to proceed to the waters, desiring it; they are asked to worship the grandson of the waters with oblation so that he gives consecrated water. Apām Napāt is the one who shines without fuel, who gives waters so that Indra is elevated to heroism (4). Soma is depicted as a man sporting with the waters as young damsels, and so too the priests are young damsels welcoming a youth as they praise and become of one mind (5–7). The waters are asked to present the Soma to Indra, who has after all liberated them from great calamity (7); to send forth the germ that is mixed with ghee, which spreads through the worlds, they are likened to many showers of the cloud-warring Indra, as well as mothers of the world (9–10); they are asked to open the udder at the rite (11); they are beheld conveying the butter and conversing in mind with the priests; and finally, the priests are asked to put the waters down on the sacred grass, and the waters, in desire, have come to the sacred grass and wish to satisfy the gods (12–15).

In its ritual usage (*ĀŚS* 5.1; *ŚŚS* 6.7.1), this beautiful hymn is called the *aponaptrīya* text and accompanies the bringing of the waters into the sacrificial arena. This occurs at the conclusion of the morning recitation of the *agniṣṭoma.* The hymn is to be recited more slowly in the beginning, and it and the other verses connected with them are to be uttered in a lower tone until the rite of *prasarpaṇa,* the "creeping," or walking of priests in a particular kind of procession. After the procession, the middle tone is to be enjoined as the hymn continues. The first verse of the hymn is to be uttered in the *adhyardhakāra,* or "one and a half breath" fashion, and the later verses without freshly breathing.[28]

This hymn is carefully choreographed during the bringing in of the

sacrificial waters (*ekadhanā)* by the priests. Before the waters are carried, the first recitation consists of verses 1–9 and 11, skipping for the moment verse 10. These, recalling from the description above, are the nourishment and valor that the waters bring to the earth and to the sacrifice and to Indra. Verse 11 asks the water to "direct" our sacrifice to the worship of the gods, to the acquisition of wealth, and to open the udder at the rite. Then the waters are actually carried in by the priests, and verse 10 is recited: "Those who move in two streams as the ones fighting for cows, going all together, this mother and [female] ruler of the world, praise the waters, *ṛṣi,* the dear sisters who grew up together." Thus, the *ṛṣi*s are asked to praise as they carry the waters toward the sacrificial arena. Finally, when the waters come in sight, *Ṛg Veda* 10.30.12 is also recited, with the verses saying, "I behold you, waters, coming, conveying the butter, the water, and the sweet Soma juices, conversing mentally with the priests." During the mixing of the waters with the Soma and the filling of the priests' goblets, other Ṛg Vedic verses are recited (*RV* 2.35.3; 1.83.2; 1.23.16–18). The *adhvaryu* priest places himself at the north of the path meant for the waters, and when they have passed across them he blesses them and goes near the waters. When the waters are placed down, he recites the last of *Ṛg Veda* 10.30, verses 14–15, which speak of the water's arriving, being made to sit down, and settling into the sacred grass at the sacrifice.

Each ritual action is metonymically mirrored by word: the waters' life-giving nature is praised in anticipation of their nourishing entrance into the sacrificial arena. As they enter the sacrificial arena, their returning and flowing is praised, as is their expanding and mixing (10). When they come into sight, they are literally beheld by the priests, as the reciter declares that he beholds the waters. As they are mixed, various verses about mixing are recited. Finally, when the waters come down into the sacrificial arena, they are literally invited to do so by verses 10.30.14–15, as honored guests. In a one-to-one correspondence, the worlds of imagination and reality, verbal utterance and gesture, are matched.

ṚG VEDA 10.88: PURIFICATION: VISIONS OF THE SUN AND WORDS ABOUT FIRE

Ṛg Veda 10.88 is a hymn that celebrates both Soma and Agni.[29] It is the ultimate in priestly hymns.[30] The gods themselves place Agni at the center of the world and, in a series of praises, unfold a portrait of him, ending in speculation about the nature of the universe.

10.88.1. The drink sacrifice, the unchanging one, is sacrificed in the Agni who finds the sun and reaches to heaven, the noble one. Through his special power, the gods expanded to carry, to preserve the world.

10.88.2. The world was entwined, encased in darkness. The sun appeared when Agni was born. In his friendship the gods, earth, heaven, and the waters, the plants are joyous.

10.88.3. Hastened by the gods worthy of sacrifice, I now wish to praise Agni, the ageless high one, who with his light has gone through the earth and this heaven, both parts of the world, the realm of air.

10.88.4. He was the first noble god *hotṛ,* whom they chose to anoint with butter. He the Agni Jātavedas has made flourish that which flies and walks, which stands and lives.

10.88.5. Because you, Jātavedas, entered at the top of the world, with your glow of light, Agni, thus we have incited you with poems, songs of praise, speeches of praise! You were worthy of sacrifice, filling the world.

10.88.6. At night, Agni is the head of the earth; from him, morning, the arising Sūrya is born. Just look at this work of art of the gods worthy of sacrifice, that he promptly goes to his work, knowing the way;

10.88.7. The one who is esteemed because of his greatness when inflamed, radiating, the one who came from heaven glowed, in this Agni all the gods sacrificed their wealth with the commission of the songs, that protects them.

10.88.8. The gods first created the commission of songs, then the Agni, then the distribution of sacrifice. This was their sacrifice that protects them. The heaven knows this, the earth knows this, the water knows this.

10.88.9. Agni whom the gods created, in whom they sacrificed all worlds, with his rays he heated up the earth and this heaven with strength in an honest intention.

10.88.10. For with the song of praise the gods in heaven produced the Agni, the one who fills the world with his strength. They made it so that he divided himself in three. He ripens the different kinds of fruit.[31]

10.88.11. When the gods worthy of sacrifice placed him in heaven, Sūrya, the son of Aditi, when the changing couple appeared, only then did all the worlds see.

10.88.12. For the entire world, the gods made Agni Vaiśvānara the sign of the days; the one who has extended the illuminating dawn, he also uncovers the darkness when he comes with his ray of light.

> 10.88.13. The seers worthy of sacrifice, the gods created the Agni Vaiśvānara, the ageless, original ancient one, never losing his way, changing star, the strong, high guardian of the mystery.
>
> 10.88.14. We call the Vaiśvānara, the one always illuminating, the Agni, the seer, with words of poetry, the god who with his greatness encompasses both wide worlds, from below as well as from above.
>
> 10.88.15. There are two paths, so I heard from the fathers for the gods and for the mortals. On both these paths, all that lives comes together that is between the father [heaven] and the mother [earth].
>
> 10.88.16. The couple [heaven and earth] carry the ends of the world, born from their heads, the one observed in spirit. He is there, turned to all the worlds, never careless, enduring, radiating.
>
> 10.88.17. Over that, both quarreled, [sitting] there and there; Which of the two of us leaders of the sacrifice know that precisely? The companions have brought into being the common celebration of drink, they came to the sacrifice. Who will answer the following?
>
> 10.88.18. "How many fires are there, how many suns, how many dawns, how many waters? I am not posing an awkward question for you, fathers; I ask you, poets, only to find out."
>
> 10.88.19. Still before the winged (flames) dress with the radiance of the dawn, Mātariśva, appearing at the sacrifice, the Brahman puts you to the test, taking a seat opposite the *hotṛ*.

This hymn describes the Soma libation as undecaying and pleasant, offered to Agni, who touches the sky, and the gods supply Agni, the giver of happiness, with food (1). The whole world was swallowed up when Agni was born, and when his radiance was born the waters and the plants and the gods rejoiced in the friendship. He is the first offerer of oblations, the brow of the universe (5), the head of all beings by night who moves swiftly through the sky by day (6). He is the guardian of men's bodies (7); he fills heaven and earth in his threefold manifestation (10); he and the dawn, Vaiśvānara, move across the sky, scattering the darkness, as the great Nakṣatra (star), who is the guardian of a mystery (13). The poet then wonders: there are two paths for the god and mortals, that of heaven and that of earth, both supporting Agni. The story is told in verses 14–15 that there was dispute between heaven and earth about who knows the sacrifice best; the poet asks the fathers in heaven, not in rivalry, but in order to know the truth, how many fires there are,

how many dawns. The answer, presumably given in verse 19, is that so long as the dawn follows night, the sacrificers take their place to support the sacrifice.

In the Śrauta literature, the hymn is used in the *āgnimārutaśastra,* the name of a small sacrifice dedicated to Agni and the Maruts, which is held on the fifth day of the *agniṣṭoma* (ĀŚS 8.8; ŚŚS 10.6.9). Agni is clearly held up and compared to food and the sun, both of which figure so prominently as images within the *agniṣṭoma.* the Maruts are said to be very jealous of the sacrificial substances and knowledge, and competitive for sacrificial food (*BD* 4.46–56). While the Maruts are not named in this hymn, the reference to squabbling over the sacrifice in the last verses of *Ṛg Veda* 10.88 is perhaps relevant. The overall associative world suggested by this *viniyoga* is one of appeasing rivalry over food, in order that the nourishment of the *agniṣṭoma* can take place.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* (3.128cd–132) uses this hymn in a way that immediately purifies the body of the poisonous effects of forbidden food, in a personal rite that involves meditating on the sun.[32]

> 3.129cd. One should employ the *haviṣpāntīya* hymn [*RV* 10.88] in case of
>
> 3.130. sins of forbidden food, and recite the *haviṣpāntīya* for this is sacred as well as excellent, and should be meditated on perpetually.
>
> 3.131. A restrained person gazing at the sun should recite for six months; he sees the way leading to the gods in the orb of the sun.
>
> 3.132. And the knowledge of the highest self which abides in his body becomes manifest. One gets rid of all sins after reciting the *haviṣpāntīya* hymn.

This passage is reminiscent of the *Chandogya Upaniṣad* 5.11–24. But the most important thing is that the images of the two paths, in 10.88.13–14, are then used in the rite, when the brahmin meditates on the sun and understands the path to go on, the "way leading to the gods in the orb of the sun." Moreover, in this passage the purification of the highest self, which abides in his body, becomes manifest. Thus in this *viniyoga,* the purification of poisonous food, which is referred to in verse 1 of the hymn, is also identified in the rite with the purification of the body through self-knowledge and knowledge of the right path, which is referred to at the end of the hymn. Thus digestion and enlightenment are metonymically juxtaposed in a single meditative act.

CONCLUSIONS

Let us review, then, the ways in which these *viniyoga*s have created different kinds of associative worlds about eating. In the application of *Ṛg Veda* 1.2 and 1.3, the communal process of consumption involving the full participation of the deities in the Śrauta world became a solitary eating process in the Vidhāna world, with the divinities looking on. In the Śrauta *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 1.72.17–21, the food offering itself was made to resemble the action of Viṣṇu striding. In the Gṛhya view, the body plunging in the consecrated pond also resembled that striding. Finally, the action of a single person's thumb in the Vidhāna application mirrored Viṣṇu's act of crossing a world. In the hymn to food, *Ṛg Veda* 1.187, the images are celebratory. But in their Vidhāna ritual usage, they are used to dispel an anxiety about the lack of food. In *Ṛg Veda* 7.1, the hymn to food, the image of food is part of the all-conquering sacrifice in the Śrauta material, as well as the sacrifices in which food is increased. Its Vidhāna ritual usages show the ways in which the hymn's inclusion is part of the threefold schema of the universe, signifying, along with the other "end" and "middle" Vedic hymns, completeness in the consuming body as well as the universe. The hymns to Agni (10.1–5) are used in the Śrauta world to show the ways in which consumption is mirrored by the rising sun, and food is anticipated in the ritual placement of the *havirdhāna* cart. Such ritual elaboration is replaced in the Vidhāna application by the same individual "eater" who recites the hymn before his noonday meal. In the Śrauta *viniyoga* of the hymn to Soma (*RV* 10.30), there is an elegant, one-to-one correspondence with the process of the water's nourishment in the universe and its processing into the sacrificial arena. Finally, in *Ṛg Veda* 10.88, the images of the wonders of Agni and Soma are part of the sacrifice to Agni and the Maruts, whose overtones are one of scarcity of ritual offerings. In the Vidhāna application, however, these images are transformed into a focus on the two paths of Agni and a removal of the negative effects of food for the individual meditating on the sun.

In this transition from the early to late Vedic periods, and from Śrauta to Vidhāna usages, gods begin as eaters who consume along with humans in the sacrifice. They then become the "blessers" of human eaters, not participants of their own. The Śrauta sacrificial gestures of offering and eating resemble the three-fold gestures of Viṣṇu, and later these same images of Viṣṇu become a means of consecrating *one's own*

food as the world. Food begins in the Śrauta world as part of an all-conquering sacrifice and later becomes an image of completeness in its own right. Anticipation of consuming food in a Śrauta Soma sacrifice is seen as analogous to the movements of the rising sun; such images later become simple anticipation of one's individual noonday meal. The hymn that begins as a step-by-step Śrauta reflection on the powers of water in a ritually choreographed act becomes, in the later Vidhāna view, a mode of warding off life-threatening danger in a waterless world. And finally, what begins as a reciprocal exchange of food between Agni and the gods becomes a meditation on self-knowledge through Agni and his ability to take away the evil effects of the digestive process.

This development can make a small contribution to the history of sacrifice in India, in that these *viniyoga*s show that changing ideas about food are not simply the internalization of the sacrifice, the Upanṣadic *prāṇāgnihotra,* which is "the fusion and concentration of both meal and sacrifice in the single person of the sacrificer."[33] In the internalization of the sacrifice, images of consumption in the sacrificial arena become identified with individual parts of the body. Rivers and waters become veins, the fires become identified with different organs, and so on. However, in the dynamics outlined above, mantras and images of consumption are not internalized per se, made one with parts of the body. Rather, it is as if the mantras become apparatus available for cooking and consumption by a virtuoso chef. In some ways, the change is similar to what food writer Molly O'Neill describes in the behavior of contemporary consumers who need a professional-standard stove in their kitchen, even though they may never use it. Their food world, as well as the late Vedic food world, is not simply internalization, but a matter of the wise individual use of technical apparatus.

The images of food and ingestion begin as actually linked to fire and the activities of fire; they are a matter of divine-human orchestrations and connected to the gods and the cosmically creative activities of those gods. In this way, the early Śrautas's one anticipating body, or one consuming body, is only part of the larger activities of consumption signified by the larger acts of sacrifice. In later Vedic times, following Molly O'Neill's *idea* of the professional stove, these same mantric images become potential helpers and supporters to the individual act of eating. They are powerful background to the meditative and mantra-wielding powers of the individual eater who digests with the power of fire and the gods and becomes enlightened with the power of fire and the gods — all on his own.

CHAPTER 5

The Vedic "Other"

Spoilers of Success

The doubleness will become an extensive world view
applicable not only to all persons in the universe of
friends and enemies, but to all objects and places.

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*

I have come intensely powerful, with the force of Viśvakarma;
I claim your minds, your vows, your counsel in war.

Ṛg Veda 10.166.4, to one's enemies

Imagine for a moment a Vedic householder who has just built a new chariot. He has carefully blessed each part of the vehicle with mantras, circumambulated the local sacred pond, and drives it to the assembly hall. There, before entering the hall, he utters imprecations against his enemies, wishing that they be trampled underfoot "like frogs underwater."

How would a scholar describe this scene? This rite (*ĀGS* 2.6), among many others, has been included, for better or worse, in "nonsolemn" rites. Those involve, among other things, the recitation of Ṛg Vedic hymns celebrating the destruction of one's enemies, using graphic images such as the one above — adversaries being trampled under one's feet "like frogs underwater." Rites and hymns that involve the destruction of enemies are deeply problematic for any number of reasons, not least of which is their classification under the term *magical sorcery*. The term implies a lack of richness of imagination — the sheer manipulation of the universe for one's own personal, and by implication, nonsocial ends. Rites involving enemies are a kind of extreme case of the more general problem with magic in India. Magic takes a role in the problematic evolutionary perspective that the traditional Indological description of the

early Vedic period implies: the move from the "solemn" to the "non-solemn," from the "domestic" rites to the "magical and/or popular." In so far as it describes a world that is not rich in personal, social, and political experience, but only rich in manipulation, the term *magic* deprives the image of its resonance in early Vedic thought. Yet even these "enemy-oriented" texts are part of the Vedic *śākhā*s, and as such their interpretations actually play a role in the cultural conceptions of place, time, and person and in how such conceptions changed in response to new ritual circumstances. Indeed it is *only* if we take this notion of branch seriously that we can develop any kind of serious access to the intellectual operation that went into the dangerous stranger in the Vedic period. Yet there are subtleties to the Vedic understanding of enemies that can help us build an intriguing new intellectual history, one that shows the idea of the enemy being directly related to the cultural construction of vulnerability, of being open to danger. I want to show through small interpretive histories of mantra that enemies — the image of the enemy — is associated, metonymically, with particular ritual moments. This lens gives us another perspective, whereby we can see the ways in which imagining the enemy is a process integrally tied up with points of sociritual vulnerability and the ways in which these points change over time.

The idea of the enemy is as complex as the Vedic world itself. In the *Ṛg Veda,* the word *śatru* is used more than eighty times and tends to be used to praise the martial deeds of Indra and the Maruts in vanquishing their foes. (*RV* 1.39.4 and 1.33.13 are good typical examples.) As Grassmann notes, the word tends to refer to someone who is equal in strength, a matched adversary.[1] So, too, an enemy can be something that is an adversary or simply an obstruction. In *Ṛg Veda* 32.4, for instance, Indra destroys the first born of the clouds, leaving no enemy to oppose him. This could mean either his enemy, Vṛtra, or it could mean that in scattering the clouds, there is nothing left to obscure the atmosphere. Similarly, the word *amitra,* literally "a nonfriend," is frequently used (for example, *RV* 1.100.3; 1.131.7) in the description of these divine exploits. In a more personal vein, the term *riṣa (riśa),* from the root *riṣ,* "to tear," also means an enemy in the sense of an injurer, someone who tears off, or devours. So, too, *riśadas* is someone who devours or destroys enemies (also see *RV* 1.39.4).

Yet *śatru* and related terms are only one of several ideas about the other in Vedic worlds. The *ārya-dāsa* (noble/slave) or *ārya/mleccha* (noble speaker/indistinct speaker) relationship is also central in this sense of an "other" who is strange and potentially hostile. Mentions of this relationship are piecemeal in the earliest religious compositions of the Āryans, the *Ṛg Veda*. They revolve around celebrating the Āryan warrior

god Indra's victories over the *dāsa*s, who are considered dark-colored ones (*kṛṣṇa varṇa)*: "You, Indra, subdued Pipru and powerful Mṛgaya for Ṛjiśvan, the son of Vidathin, you smote fifty thousand dark ones, you shattered cities, as old age shatters good looks" (*RV* 4.16.13). Not only are the *dāsa*s considered lesser because darker, but their being conquered actually increases the strength of the conqueror: in one hymn, the Ṛg Vedic poet says, "Indra kills *dāsa*s and increases the might of the Āryans" (*RV* 10.22.8). In this same hymn there are references to the *dāsa* as non-human, or *amanuṣya,* and hence related to the idea of *mleccha,* or those who speak indistinctly.

So, too, fire was used as a means of acquiring lands over the dark ones. A hymn to fire suggests this: "O Fire, due to your fear the dark ones fled; scattered abroad and deserting their possessions, when for Puru, glowing Vaiśvānara, you burn up and tear their cities" (*RV* 7.5.3). Fire also "drives out *dāsa*s and brings light to the Āryans" (*RV* 8.5.6).[2] Relatedly, the *dāsa* seemed enslaved to Indra, or driven out, wandering from place to place. Many hymns refer to the fact that Indra "binds *dāsa*s one hundred and ten *dāsa*s" and "leads away *dāsa*s at his will" (*RV* 5.34.6). So, too, "the dark-colored *dāsa*s are driven away by Indra from place to place" (*RV* 4.47.21).

While these references are important in early Indian imagining about social boundaries, other social boundaries also existed. The *dāsa* is someone who worships the wrong gods, who hoards wealth, who neither conducts Vedic sacrifices nor speaks Sanskrit correctly like the Āryan (*RV* 1.32; 2.12). Moreover, there is also a sense of nobility to the term, connoting dignity and strength. The *ārya* is the one who receives the earth from Indra (4.26) and has superhuman strength. We can see that Āryan identity is based on its distinction from the other, darker ones, and exists in relationship to definitions of other peoples. The Āryans' understanding of themselves was based on color characteristics as well as their prowess in battle and war. Most importantly, the *ārya* has control over sacred language. An *ārya* is someone who is to be respected, who is victorious over the dark ones, and who lays hereditary claim to a higher social status by virtue of language.

Finally, many of the Sūtras contains ways in which the enemy shall be overcome through techniques of war. Enemies here become specific opponents in battle. For example, the *Kauṣītaki Śrauta Sūtra,* in a Ṛg Vedic *śākhā,* advocates the use of musical instruments, small stones, and goads in order to frighten the elephants of enemy forces. In this same Sūtra there are rites for warding off arrows by enemy forces (14.12–14), rites for blessing musical instruments, amulets for warriors (16.1–7), and mantras to confuse enemy forces (14.17). So, too, *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya*

Sūtra 3.12 prescribes a whole series of mantras about the enemy as the king is being dressed for war by the *purohita,* or household priest; it also prescribes mantras about the enemy in the midst of shooting with arrows, or drumming, or other forms of actual battle.

There is perhaps no act more susceptible to being labeled as "magical practice" than the uttering of a verse to destroy one's enemies. However, the Ṛg Vedic imprecations against enemies are not treated here as examples of "sorcery," but rather in their own intellectual milieus—the Śrauta or public rites, the Gṛhya, or domestic rites, and the Vidhāna, or "everyday application" rites.

ṚG VEDA 1.32: INDRA'S SLAYING THE DRAGON

Let me begin with a simple case of a *viniyoga* of mantras about the enemy. It involves a well-known hymn, and its applications are fairly understandable and straightforward. *Ṛg Veda* 1.32 can serve as a prototype for understanding the dynamics of mantras about the enemy.[3] The hymn is one of the classical accounts of Indra's slaying the dragon, Vṛtra. The hymn is replete with the imagery of bringing forth rain, of sexual engagement, as well as of the actual slaying of the demon Vṛtra.

> 1.32.1. Let me now sing the heroic deeds of Indra, the first performed by the wielder of the thunderbolt. He killed the dragon and pierced an opening for the waters; he split open the bellies of mountains.
>
> 1.32.2. He killed the dragon who lay upon the mountain; Tvaṣṭṛ crafted the roaring thunderbolt for him. Like the lowing cows, the flowing waters rushed straight down to the sea.
>
> 1.32.3. Wildly excited like a bull, he took the Soma for himself and drank the extract from the three bowls in the three-day Soma ceremony. Indra the Generous seized his thunderbolt to hurl it as a weapon; he killed the first-born of dragons.
>
> 1.32.4. Indra, when you killed the first-born of dragons and overcame by your own artifice, the artifice of the magicians, at that very moment you brought forth the sun, the sky, and the dawn. Since then, you have found no enemy *(śatru)* to conquer you.
>
> 1.32.5. With his great weapon, the thunderbolt, Indra killed Vṛtra, his greatest enemy, the one without shoulders. Like the trunk of a tree whose branches have been chopped off by an axe, the dragon lies flat on the ground.
>
> 1.32.6. Confused by drunkenness like one who is not a soldier, Vṛtra defied the great hero who had overcome the mighty and who drank Soma down to

> the bottom. Unable to withstand the onslaught of his weapons, he found in Indra an enemy to conquer him and was shattered, with his nose crushed.
>
> 1.32.7. Without feet or hands he fought against Indra, who struck him on the nape of the neck with this thunderbolt. The steer who wished to become with equal of the bull, bursting with seed, Vṛtra lay broken in many places.
>
> 1.32.8. As he lay there like a broken reed, the swelling waters flowed for Manu. Those waters that Vṛtra had enclosed with this power — the dragon now lay at their feet.
>
> 1.32.9. The vital energy of Vṛtra's mother faded away, for Indra had hurled his deadly weapon at her. Above was the mother, below was the son; Danu lay down like a cow with her calf.
>
> 1.32.10. In the midst of the channels of the waters which never stood still or rested, the body was hidden. The waters flow over Vṛtra's secret place; he who found Indra an enemy to conquer him sank into long darkness.
>
> 1.32.11. The waters who had the Dāsa for the husband, the dragon for their protector, were imprisoned like the cows imprisoned by the Paṇis. When he killed Vṛtra he split open the outlet of the waters that had been closed.
>
> 1.32.12. Indra, you became a hair of a horse's tail when Vṛtra struck you on the corner of the mouth. You, the one god, the brave one, you won the cows; you won the Soma; you released the seven streams so that they could flow.
>
> 1.32.13. No use was the lightning and thunder, fog, and hail that he had scattered about, when the dragon and Indra fought. Indra the Generous remained victorious for all time to come.
>
> 1.32.14. What avenger of the dragon did you see, Indra, that fear entered your heart when you had killed him? Then you crossed the ninety-nine streams like the frightened eagle crossing the realms of earth and air.
>
> 1.32.15. Indra, who wields the thunderbolt in his hand, is the king of that which moves and that which rests, of the tame and of the horned. He rules the people as their king, encircling all this as a rim encircles spokes.

He killed the dragon with Tvaṣṭṛ's thunderbolt (2); like a bull, he takes Soma for himself and drinks the extracts from the three bowls in the three-day Soma ceremony (3). He overcomes the artifice *(māyā)* of the magicians. Vṛtra, muddled by drunkenness, challenges the Soma drinker, Indra. Indra kills the dragon, who is without shoulders, who lies like the trunk of a tree lopped off by an axe (5). Vṛtra is like a steed who wishes to become like the bull bursting with seed (Indra) (7), and his mother

Danu is also slain (9). The waters were imprisoned, and Indra splits open the outlet of the waters (10, 11). He becomes the "hair of a horses tail" when Vṛtra strikes him on the mouth (12). Even the fog and lightning and thunder that Vṛtra tries to scatter about ceases to be effective (13). The fourteenth verse, mentions fear, when Indra flees like an eagle, crossing the ninety-nine streams and the realms of earth and air (14). Indra ends being the king of all moving and resting things, encircling all this as a rim encircles spokes (15).

What of this well-known hymn's public ritual usages? Not surprisingly, this hymn is used in the Śrauta material for the third pressing of the Soma (*AŚS* 5.15, 8.6; *ŚŚS* 7.20.8). The *Niṣkevalya Śastra* is the section of the midday Soma pressing recited by the *hotṛ,* and the performance is the second one at the midday pressing. Clearly, the verses of *Ṛg Veda* 1.32 are meant to indicate the power of Soma as a world-conquering drink that releases nothing less than the waters of the world. In verse 4, it is clear that the Soma drinker is the "superior drinker," for Indra himself is "confused by drunkenness," presumably from a lesser drink which is not that of the Soma being pressed in the sacrifice. The Soma-induced deeds of Indra act as a kind of analogue for the Soma-induced deeds of the sacrificer. There is a basic correspondence between the acts of the presser and the acts of the god.

However, the latest ritual text reveals a highly generalized *viniyoga* in which this elaborate correspondence between ritual and act is broken. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.92 states, "He who is restrained should mutter Hiraṇyastūpa's hymn [*RV* 1.32] which is a high praise of Indra's deeds: he pushes against his enemies with very little effort."[4] Thus, regardless of his ability to press Soma, or his ability to remember all of the ritual rules about recitation, the piously disposed person who has enemies can use this hymn as a kind of magical incantation. Notice that he is able to do this with "little effort." What was one difficult has become easy; what was once a matter of ritual initiation has become a matter of yogic disposition.

ṚG VEDA 6.73: INVOKING THE MOUNTAIN BREAKER

We move from the more generic case of *Ṛg Veda* 1.32 to an intriguing case that reveals the enemy as a potential threat when there is a change in ritual procedure. Our second set of mantras, contained in *Ṛg Veda* 6.73, are verses whose express purpose is clearly intended to destroy enemies via the god Bṛhaspati, the witness to truth.

> 6.73.1. Bṛhaspati, mountain breaker, first born, witness to truth, offspring of Aṅgiras, drinker of the oblation, one who crosses the two paths and sits with the drink of *gharma:* he is our father; he is the bull who roars and thunders in both worlds.
>
> 6.73.2. Bṛhaspati has made a place for the one who comes regularly to the sacrificial assembly, destroying obstacles [literally, "*vṛtra*s"], conquering strongholds, overcoming enemies; he demolishes his adversaries *[amitra]* in battles.
>
> 6.73.3. Divine Bṛhaspati has conquered the treasures, and the great herds of cattle, wishing to win the waters and heaven. With mantras he destroys the enemy.[5]

In *Ṛg Veda* 6.73, Bṛhaspati is invoked by various names and lauded with various cosmic and earthly heroic deeds, including crossing the world, the bull who roars, and favoring the diligent sacrificer by vanquishing the enemy.

Yet the hymn's ritual uses *(viniyoga)* in the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*s show particular character. To put it in technical Vedic terminology, in the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* the hymn is used during the *ukthya* days of the *abhiplavaṣaḍaha* ceremonies by the *brāhmaṇācchaṃsin* priest. In plainer English: the *abhiplava,* literally "flowing forth," ceremony is a six-day Soma ceremony — essentially the unit that makes up the "building blocks" of the model yearly *sattra*s, or special sacrifices, in which all priests are present.[6] The measurement of *sattra* time is marked by the *abhiplava,* or six-day unit. This six-day unit itself is made up of a sandwichlike structure, with two *agniṣṭoma* sacrifices at the beginning and the end, and four *ukthya,* or recitation sacrifices, in the middle. As distinct from the *agniṣṭoma* sacrifices, the *ukthya* sacrifices are those that focus primarily on praise, and not only on libation. Moreover, this hymn is recited by the *brāhmaṇācchaṃsin* priest, the assistant to the Brāhmaṇa priest, who is in charge of the meaning of the sacrifice. This priest is distinct from the *maitravaruṇa* and *acchāvāka* — the "invoker" and "inviter" — priests. In other words, the scene set up is this: the Ṛg Vedic hymn is recited in the *ukthya,* the meatier, praise portion of the *abhiplava,* which is conducted by the brāhmanic priest, the more semantically oriented of all the priests participating in the *ukthya.* Again, this time in plain English: the scene at which *Ṛg Veda* 6.73 is recited is the "core of the core" of the yearly *sattra,* which is seen as the most powerful model of *sattra*s or gatherings.

Yet there is more to this scene: the Ṛg Vedic verses against enemies

from 6.73 are prescribed as the *exception,* or as an addition to the scene. They should be recited in places where "overrecitals" can happen — that is, the recitation of extra mantras in order to fill in space when extra time is needed for preparation of substances. As the text puts it, this verse against enemies is prescribed for the *brāhmaṇācchaṃsin* in the case of a need for an increase in the number of *stoma* repetitions (*ĀŚS* 7.9). So, too, in the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* the hymn is used as part of the *brāhmaṇācchāṃsi-śastra* — when more praises to the deity are to be added by the *brāhmaṇācchaṃsin* priest in order to address special circumstances. Once again, an expanded ritual is what is at stake.

Our final text, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (2.124) simply describes the hymn 6.73 in the most general of ways, as "destructive of rivals" *(sapatnanibarhām),* provided one has done homage to Bṛhaspati. This pattern of taking the mantra out of ritualized context and putting it to general use is a significant feature of the *Ṛg Vidhāna.*

How, then, shall we sum up this interpretive thread? In the Śrauta texts, *Ṛg Veda* 6.73 is inserted at a moment of change, of contingency in what would otherwise be the core of the heart of a Vedic *sattra.* Enemies are imagined at the pinnacle of that ceremony which is grand and stabilizing, when minor shifts occur in ritual procedure that could jeopardize the entire cosmological project. In the Vidhāna text, ritual is irrelevant in the face of the destructive and generalized power of the words themselves.

ṚG VEDA 10.83–84: INVOKING MANYU, WITH *TAPAS* AS ALLY

Ṛg Veda 10.83–84 are two other examples of the construction of the enemy "other," where Manyu is invoked to aid the worshiper in conquering the *ārya* and *dāsa* tribes to chase his foes and to slay them. Yet like the previous example of *Ṛg Veda* 6.73 to Bṛhaspati, these hymns are applied in intriguing cases of ritual exceptions.

> 10.83.1. He who worships you, Manyu, the thunderbolt, enjoys might and strength combined, may we overcome both the *dāsa* and the *ārya* with you as our ally, invigorating, strong, and vigorous.
>
> 10.83.2. Manyu is Indra, Manyu was a god, the *hotṛ,* Varuṇa, Jātavedas. The human tribe cries out to Manyu, "Protect us, Manyu, jointly with *tapas.*"
>
> 10.83.3. Come to us, Manyu, you who are the strongest of the strong. With *tapas* as your ally overthrow our enemies, the slayer of Vṛtra, the slayer of the Dasyus, bring to us all riches.

10.83.4. Manyu, you who are possessed of overpowering strength, self-existent, angry, the overcomer of enemies, the witness of all, enduring, vigorous, grant us strength in battles.

10.83.5. Ṛṣi Manyu, I have retreated without a share in your power, the gathering of your powerful force; I have grown angry without purpose. Come to me in one person and give me strength.

10.83.6. I am yours, come back toward me, advancing to me, turned toward me, O Superior One, All-Powerful One; Manyu, bearer of the thunderbolt, come up to me, let us both slay the Dasyus, and conquer the enemies.[7]

10.84.1. May the leaders in the form of Agni, in the same car with you, Manyu, who are accompanied by the Maruts, proceed to battle, advancing, exulting, indignant, armed with sharp arrows, whetting their weapons.

10.84.2. Manyu, blazing like Agni, be victorious; come as our general, enduring when invoked in battle; having slain the enemies divide the treasure; granting strength, scatter foes.

10.84.3. Overthrow, Manyu, our attacker. Advance against our foes, wounding, killing, annihilating them. Who can resist your fierce might? You who have no companion — subjecting them, you make them subject.

10.84.4. You are praised, Manyu, as alone of many; make us keen in combat; with you, of the undiminished radiance, for our ally, we raise a loud shout for victory.

10.84.5. Manyu, the giver of victory like Indra, irreproachable, be our protector here; enduring one, we sing acceptable praise to you; we know this [praise] to be the source by which you have become mighty.

10.84.6. O destructive thunderbolt, the overpowerer, you possess potent strength. With your counsel as our companion, Manyu, with the collected strength of a large booty, you are invoked by many.

10.84.7. May Manyu and Varuṇa bestow upon us wealth of both kinds, undivided and completely our own, and may our enemies, bearing fear within their hearts, be overcome and utterly destroyed.[8]

In these two hymns, the self-sufficiency of Manyu is stressed; the power of his *tapas,* or meditative heat, is what also gives him strength in battle to overcome adversaries. He is self-existent *(svayambhū),* the witness of all *(viśvacarṣaṇiḥ)* (*RV* 10.83.4). He is explicitly likened to Agni, who is also described in many hymns as a self-manifest "witnessing" god. He is without companion (*ekaja; RV* 10.84.3), praised as one among many (*eko bahūnām; RV* 10.84.4). At the same time, he is not

completely autonomous: Manyu's power in battle is also depicted as the result of exchange for praise (*RV* 10.84.5). The *ṛṣi* states that he knows that the only way that the god has become powerful is by receiving the mantras of eulogy.

Beginning again with the Śrauta literature (*ĀŚS* 9.7–8; *ŚŚS* 14.22.4–5), the passages from *Ṛg Veda* 10.83 and 10.84 are used in the *śyena* (falcon) and *ajira* (rapid one) sacrifices. These are one-day sacrifices that produce fast results and are used as a form of protection against *abhicāra,* a charm that has been said against one by an enemy. (Not surprisingly from our perspective, the term *abhicāra* is frequently translated as "curse" and *abhicāranīya* is frequently translated as "sorcery," but both words are best translated as "going toward," or "goingfully.") To put it in technical terms: in design, these sacrifices are "one-day" models of the *agniṣṭoma,* or regular Soma ritual. And these Ṛg Vedic verses against enemies (*RV* 10.83–84) are to be inserted at the recitals that normally occur at the midday point of the regular Soma sacrifice (these midday recitals are called *niṣkevalya* and *marutvatīya*). Thus, again in plain English, these are one-day sacrifices modeled on regular Soma sacrifices, to which are added, at their midday, "central point," imprecations, or "words which go toward" an enemy. Thus, like the *abhiplava* ceremony, both the *śyena* and the *ajira* sacrifices constitute an expansion, an extraordinary circumstance in the everyday operations of the *agniṣṭoma.*

In *Ṛg Vidhāna* 3.77–78, the Ṛg Vedic verses 10.83–84 are used to accompany the binding on of an amulet of iron used in a rite to bring about the death of one's rivals.

> One should always mutter the two enemy-destroying hymns, beginning with *yas te manyo* [*RV* 10. 83–84]. One should wear an iron amulet, on which an oblation of ghee has been poured, with the two hymns.
>
> On the fourth, one should offer an iron pin into a fire lit with *khādira*-fuel: thus one pushes against one's rivals.[9]

This usage means that they accompany a ritual designed for all-purpose, general use and, therefore, designate an enemy that is an all-purpose, general enemy. Their function in the Śrauta ritual is entirely beside the point, since that public arena is no longer the frame in which the enemy is imagined.

ṚG VEDA 1.50: DISPERSING YELLOW

The next well-known Ṛg Vedic hymn finds its *viniyoga,* or application, not in the Śrauta Sūtra, or public rites, but in the Gṛhya Sūtra, or domes-

tic rites. Thus a turn from the well-ordered sacrificial life to the well-ordered brahmin life, equally free from enemies.

> 1.150.1. The brilliant banners draw upward the god who knows creatures, in order for all to see the sun.
>
> 1.150.2. For the sun who sees all, the constellations, along with the nights, go away like thieves.
>
> 1.150.3. The rays, his banners, are visible, shining like fire on creatures.
>
> 1.150.4. Crossing, you are the maker of light, O Sun; you light up the entire realm of space.
>
> 1.150.5. You rise up facing the people of the gods, facing humans, facing all in order [for them] to see heaven.
>
> 1.150.6. He is the eye with which, O Purifying Varuṇa, you look upon the active one among creatures.
>
> 1.150.7. You cross heaven and the atmosphere, O Sun, measuring the days with the nights, seeing the generations.
>
> 1.150.8. Seven mares carry you in the chariot, O sun god with the bright hair, seeing from afar.
>
> 1.150.9. The sun has yoked the seven radiant daughters of the chariot. He goes with them who have yoked themselves.
>
> 1.150.10. Out of darkness, we are seeing the higher light all around — going to the sun, the god among gods, the highest light.
>
> 1.150.11. Rising today, revered as a friend, climbing to the highest sky, O Sun, remove my disease of the heart, and my yellow pallor.
>
> 1.150.12. Let us place my yellow pallor among the parrots and starlings; here let us place my yellow pallor among the yellow birds.
>
> 1.150.13. This Āditya has risen with all of his force, destroying my enemy. Let me not be subject to the enemy.[10]

The first ten verses describes the most basic of Vedic sacrificial situations: the "active one" mentioned in verse 6 is most probably the diligent sacrificer, rising early. He is the one responsible for praising the rising sun, greeting the sun as it lifts the world out of darkness. The sun, endowed with bright hair of flame, rides in a chariot drawn by seven mares, as the constellation and the stars steal away like thieves.

Verses 11–13 take an interesting turn, however. In verse 11, the poet asks the sun to remove his disease of the heart and yellow pallor; in verse

12, he asks that his yellowness be placed in other things yellow in his immediate environment: parrots, starlings, and other yellow birds. Finally, in verse 13, the sun, here called the Āditya or son of Aditi, is praised as rising with all of his force, throwing down the hated enemy. "Let me not be subject to the enemy," concludes the poet. The hearer of the hymn is left with the impression that the poet is victorious not only in the daily task of asking the sun to rise but in the curing of disease and the overall destruction of enemies.

Turning now to the Gṛhya Sūtras, we can see the commentarial strategy applied to *Ṛg Veda* 1.50. In the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (4.6.4), *Ṛg Veda* 1.50 is employed in the *utsarga* ceremony, literally the "passing over," or skipping of certain days and rituals, and the marking of the end of any period of Vedic recitation, including the ending of Vedic study by a student. As would be expected, the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* focuses on the *utsarga* as marking the end of the period of Vedic study. The student performs this in the bright half of the fortnight, facing northeasterly in a wooded area. He recites the *sauraṇyi* hymns, the Ṛg Vedic hymns having to do with the sun, the first of which is *Ṛg Veda* 1.50. After this, the student, at every verse, throws down clods of earth all around to his right. He then does homage to the *ṛṣi*s, meters, gods, and fathers, as is common in many Gṛhya rites.

This small ceremony of "putting to rest" the meters, as the text says, is of interest from a number of different standpoints. All the *sauraṇyi* hymns, beginning with *Ṛg Veda* 1.50 (*RV* 1.115; 10.37; 10.158), are hymns asking for protection and deliverance from one's enemies as well as celebrating the strength of the sun. It is no accident that both victory and vulnerability are stressed. As Heesterman has shown, silence — the stopping of recitation — is an extremely vulnerable point in Vedic ritual.[11] In the *brahmodya,* or verbal contest of the Śrauta ritual, it signifies defeat on the part of the one who cannot respond and remains quiet. On a more general level, it also signifies the culmination of the ritual, or the culmination of the period of Vedic study, and thus the culmination of knowledge. This victorious power of silence is also exemplified in the all-powerful nature of the Brāhmaṇa priest in Vedic ritual, who remains silent throughout the proceedings. The *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra,* then, shows that its use of the Ṛg Vedic hymn is not merely to give a nod to the sun as one proceeds on one's way after a period of Vedic study. It is also to acknowledge (as *RV* 1.50 and all the other *sauraṇyi* hymns do) that one is, at this moment of ending, also very vulnerable — without the protection of the constant repetition of mantras.

Turning finally to the use of the *Ṛg Veda* 1.50 in the *Ṛg Vidhāna:* the situation *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.101 describes where *Ṛg Veda* 1.50 is to be recited is not specifically ritual, but is generalized to include all diseases and all enemies; any and all possible situations in which diseases or enemies may occur; and, prophylactically, any situations of health as well.

> 1.101. A ritually pure person should regularly and repeatedly mutter the last three verses of [the work of] Praskaṇva [*RV* 1.50.11–13] when he is seized by diseases as well as when he is free of disease, for this [practice] is healthy.
>
> 1.102. And the last half-verse of this [hymn] [*RV* 1.50.13.cd] is known as "hostility to enemies." One should think of the person who is hated, and on seeing him, one should mutter it.
>
> 1.103. If that person is an evil doer, [then] within three days one subdues [his] hatred. Muttering it at sunrise, [he obtains] a life without decay; in the middle of the day, [he obtains] energy;
>
> 104. but when the sun sets, he wards off his hater. Vigor, energy, health [and] hostility to enemies — [these have been] made clear.[12]

And, as *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.102 shows, time is not specified either: whenever one sees a hated enemy, this verse can be called to mind — not just when one is concerned with the more familiar Vedic project of the eradication of enemies through sacrificial means. The mere thought of the person hated in combination with the mantra restrains his hatred within three days. And finally, as verses 1.103–4 make clear, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* states that the Ṛg Vedic verses are efficacious in their various ways not only at particular times of sacrificial performance, but at all times, indicated by the various positions of the sun: sunrise gives long life; midday gives energy; and sunset gives freedom from one's enemies.

ṚG VEDA 10.166: INVOKING SPEECH AS CONQUEROR

Our next case study, RV 10.166, is also used in an intriguing way in the Gṛhya, or domestic ceremonies.[13] Like RV 1.50, it is also related the question of appropriate speech at a particular moment in the householder's life cycle. *Ṛg Veda* 10.166 conceptualizes the enemy as *sapatna,* or rival, and its efficacy as *sapatnaghnam,* the destruction of such rivals. Vācaspati is invoked to put down foes and rivals, and the hymn is said to be muttered while attacking an opponent in the assembly.

> 10.166.1. Make me Indra, a bull *[ṛṣabham]* among my peers, a victor over my rivals, the killer of my enemies, a sovereign, the lord of cattle.

> 10.166.2. I am the killer of my enemies, like Indra, unharmed and unwounded; may all my enemies be thrown under my feet.
>
> 10.166.3. I bind you here, as are the two ends of a bow with the bowstring, restrain them, Lord of speech, that they may be defeated by me in the dispute.
>
> 10.166.4. I have come intensely powerful; with the force of Viśvakarman, I claim your minds, your vows, your counsel in war.
>
> 10.166.5. Seizing on your good and booty, may I be victorious. I walk on your heads, cry aloud from beneath my feet like frogs from the water, like frogs from the water.

In this hymn, the worshiper asks Vācaspati, the lord of speech, to bind his enemies like the two ends of a bow and cries out to his enemies that he has victory over their minds as well as their sacrifices or their martial ability. He invokes the image of himself literally walking on their heads, causing them to cry aloud from beneath his feet like frogs from the water.

In the Gṛhya Sūtra literature (*ĀGS* 2.6), the same hymn is used when a householder is intending to mount a new chariot with horses, just before entering the assembly hall. As the text puts it, the householder should perform a number of different tasks in relationship to his new chariot: touching the wheels with separate hands; touching the reins and the other articles of wood on the chariot; ascending the chariot; circumambulating a pool that does not dry up; and then going to the assembly hall. With each of these actions he is to recite a separate mantra until he enters the assembly hall. The mantra he should speak upon entering the assembly hall is the one cited above, *Ṛg Veda* 10.166.

How might we describe this situation in plain English? In the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra,* remembering of enemies is enjoined at the pinnacle of a householder's success: when he has arrived at the assembly hall after consecrating the chariot in various ways and is about to face the assembled crowd who might greet him. This triumphant entry is a point of potential victory, and yet also a point of vulnerability. Who knows which enemies might greet him there in crowd? In case there are those who would challenge him, by reciting the hymn the charioteer has already imagined what he might do in response.

Finally, like the Ṛg Vedic verses discussed above, in *Ṛg Vidhāna* 10.166 is a verse intended to destroy rivals: the text makes a more general mention of a more general usage of the hymn, which is not associated with any one particular occasion or any one particular set of ene-

mies. Like the Vidhāna treatment of *Ṛg Veda* 1.50, no sacrificial substances are posited, or even referred to.

How might we sum up the changes that these interpretive threads in Vedic perspective reveal? One moves in a progression, beginning from the power of individual mantras as speech acts in the *Ṛg Veda*. In the Śrauta material, the same mantras act as prophylactic against a moment of ritual vulnerability, in the exceptions of "extrarecitals" in the *abhiplava* ceremony or the insertion of these verses in the *śyena* and *ajira* sacrifices. In the Gṛhya material, the same mantras describe some aspect of victory and vulnerability (stopping the mantric recitation at the pinnacle of Vedic study, or stopping one's new chariot at the moment of entry into the assembly hall). In the Vidhāna material, we see mantra recitation that transforms any potentially harmful agent or situation (enemies, illness, and so on) as it comments on it. The change in commentarial strategy from earlier texts to the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* then, is one of generalization from sacrificial situations to ones that include any and all possible circumstances in which the verses might be relevant.[14]

"BLACK MAGIC" AND THE ERADICATION OF THE ENEMY

Ṛg Veda *7.104: Discerning Shapes and Truth*

Ṛg Veda 7.104 is also used in a particular magic rite in the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* but with no "intervening" usages in the public rituals.[15] The images of the enemy here are highly illuminating. To paraphrase: Indra and Soma are asked to destroy the Rakṣasas; they are to make the stupid take flight and to come upon the performer of an unprofitable act, so that he may perish like an offering cast into a fire (1–2). They are asked to scatter their weapons, so they will be able to disperse without making a sound (4–5). To the devotee with pure devotion, against whom lies are uttered, let those falsehoods be like water held in the hand (8). Soma is asked to cast on the serpent all those who vilify the poet, or on the lap of Nirṛti, the goddess of destruction (9). The poet hopes that the one who strives to destroy the essence of food, horses, and cattle is deprived of person and progeny, of body and of posterity. He wishes his enemy's reputation be blighted (10–11). The understanding person knows the difference between truth and falsehood, and the one who favors Soma is able to destroy the falsehood (12). Indra is asked to slay the person who calls the poet a sorcerer *(yatudhana),* which he is not. And may the Rakṣasa who thinks himself pure perish (16). The cruel female fiend does not conceal herself and wan-

ders about like an owl at night; she is commanded to fall headlong down into the endless caverns (17). Whether the Rakṣasas fly about like birds in the night or obstructe the sacrifice, the Maruts are asked to slay them (18). Indra is asked to advance and cut them down, as a hatchet cuts down a forest or earthen vessels (21). The evil spirits also emerge in the form of an owl, or an owlet, or a dog, or a duck, or a hawk, or a vulture (22). The sorcerer, in the form of a man or a woman, who sports in murder, should be decapitated and not behold the rising sun (24).

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* (2.157–58) says that this hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 7.104, secures release for a person seized or falsely accused by enemies.

> 2.157. Whoever is either held or accused wrongly by enemies should daily offer ghee, after having fasted for a period of three days.
>
> 2.158. and he should mutter this hymns beginning with "Indra-Soma" (7.104), at least 100 times and should give something to Brāhmaṇas at the end; he destroys all enemies.[16]

Of all the hymns considered to this point, this one is the most elaborate in its imagery of what constitutes the enemy. Much of what emerges is the imagery of one who slanders, utters falsehood, and "wrongly" accuses or captures the petitioner. The image of the purity of the speaker is invoked, as is the "false purity" of the accuser, who only thinks of himself as pure *(śucir asmīti āha)*. In addition, the shape of the enemy is characterized as a "natural" shape, whether it be one of a dog, an owl, or vulture, a man, or a woman. Sāyaṇa gives a colorful account of the emphasis of this hymn (following the *Mahābhārata*). King Kalmāṣapāda is transformed into a Rakṣasa and devours the one hundred sons of the *ṛṣi* Vasiṣṭha. As Sāyaṇa tells it, the Rakṣasa then assumes the *ṛṣi* Vasiṣṭha's shape after eating them and says, "I am Vasiṣṭha, and you are the Rakṣasa." And Vasiṣṭha repeats verse 12 of *Ṛg Veda* 7.104: "To the understanding one, words of truth and falsehood are easily discriminated; their words are mutually at variance. Of these two, Soma holds dear that which is true and right; he destroys the false." Notice that, while in the ritual Sūtras, enemies tend to be associated with the disruption of ritual procedure and the material instantiation of truth, in the Vidhāna texts the enemy is not associated so much with ritual interruption as with personal malevolence and the maintenance of falsehood against the truth teller.

ṚG VEDA 10.177: DISCERNING ILLUSION

The next hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 10.177, is quite unusual in that it is concerned with the discernment of *māyā,* or illusion *(māyābheda)*.

> 10.177.1. The wise behold with their mind in their heart the Sun, made manifest by the illusion of the Asura. The sages look into the solar orb, the ordainers desire the region of his rays.
>
> 10.177.2. The Sun bears the word in his mind; the Gandharva has spoken it within the womb; sages cherish it in the place of sacrifice, brilliant, heavenly, ruling the mind.
>
> 10.177.3. I beheld the protector, never descending, going by his paths to the east and to the west; clothing the quarters of heaven and the intermediate spaces. He constantly revolves in the midst of the worlds.[17]

The *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 4.6 articulates that verse 2 is the inviting verse of the sacrifice of the immolated to Vāc. We can see this connection quite clearly: in that word, Vāc, is in the mind of the sun. The Gandharva has spoken the womb. Sages cherish it in the place of sacrifice. The rice cake symbolizes the place of sacrifice.

The more intriguing ritual usage is the hymn's use in the *pravargya* rites. As Kashikar, Van Buitenen, Gonda, and Houben have speculated, the *pravargya* may well have been constructed as independent rite but was later incorporated in the Soma sacrifice.[18] Both the *pravargya* and the *upasad* are performed twice a day, morning and evening, for three days. Three vessels are used, the main one called *mahāvīra,* and two milking vessels. The clay vessels are prepared by the *adhvaryu* — dried in the sun and purified by the smoke of horse dung. Goat's milk is used to cool them. The main clay vessel, the *mahāvīra,* is placed on a mound to the north of the *gārhapatya* fire (in some texts, the *āhavanīya* fire), and the *ājya,* or ghee, is rubbed into it. (The two supplemental vessels are used in the same way.) It is then placed on a disk of gold or silver, heated and surrounded with coals and enclosing sticks, and covered with a golden cover. It becomes very red and hot, and the priests are enjoined to make eye contact with it. Here, mantras are chanted while the vessel is heated, and the wife recites the last mantra.

At this point, the milk of a cow and a she-goat are added to the boiling ghee, which is called *gharma,* and with it offerings are made to the Aśvins, Vāyu, Indra, Savitrī, Bṛhaspati, and Yama. The *mahāvīra* vessel is supposed to overflow in all directions, and the offering is made of this overflow to the *agnihotra.* The sacrificer drinks the remainder by the *upayamanī;* the priests only smell it. In the final *pravargya* at the end of the Soma sacrifice, the implements are disposed of in the *uttaravedi* and placed in the shape of a man, or the sun. Here, too, the wife joins in singing the ending *sāman*s. During the performance of the rite all the doors of the *prācīnavaṃśa,* or sacrificial shed, are kept closed. The wife's

shed is also screened off, but she sits in it. Two *kharas,* or mounds, are built to the north of the *gārhapatya.*

A rich, intriguing debate has occurred over the last few decades as to the meaning of this preparatory rite. Most recently, Jan Houben, Joel Brereton, and J. A. B. Van Buitenen have written on its various significances. Van Buitenen has pointed out that the *pravargya* is probably originally a fertility rite that was separated from the main Soma sacrifice and might have had an explicitly sexual character. This "hidden" quality of the *viniyoga,* as well as of the ritual proceedings themselves, may well be due to the rite's sexual undertones.[19] Houben's most recent treatment argues that it should be primarily a ritual of the sun (*TĀ* 5.10.6; 4.7.1; 4.8.4), a cultivation of spiritual experience in which fecundity (*TĀ* 5.6.12; *AB* 1.22) and Soma (*ĀŚS* 15.5.7) are also complementary aspects.[20] All the mantras recited during the ritual refer, both directly and indirectly, to these topics. (See *TĀ* 5; *KA* 2–3; and *SB* 14.) Brereton argues for a more "down-to-earth" interpretation, which sees the resulting "brilliance" *(tejas)* of the performer as a social, even "heavenly" goal, typical of most *artha*s of Vedic sacrifice, but not necessarily in the meditative tradition. Most importantly for our purposes, *Taittirīya Āranyaka* 5.8.7. and 5.10.5. see it as a rite "against enemies, who hate us and whom we hate."

Given all the debate above, why would this hymn 10.177, in particular, be used in the *pravargya* rite? One answer might be that the *pravargya* is filled with motifs of hidden-ness and revelation. First, in a reflection of the ancient story of Dadhyañc, *Taittirīya Āranyaka* 5.1 also sees the *pravargya* as a kind of answer to a cosmic riddle. As Houben also explains in an earlier work, Makha Vaiṣṇava wins all the glory in the gods' sacrificial session. His bowstring (from a bow won as a result of the sacrifice) is eaten by white ants, and his head is accidentally cut off as the bow flies forward. The head of the sacrifice is restored by the Aśvins, and this head is the *pravargya* sacrifice. The *mahāvīra* vessel in particular is, in Houben's view, the aniconic representation of this head. In other texts, too, Prajāpati is beheaded, and the *pravargya* is needed to put the head back.[21] (See *ŚB* 14.1.1.10–27, 28, 31; 14.1.6.32; *PB* 7.5.6; *JB* 3.126.)

Second, the application of other hymns in the *pravargya* seem to reinforce this idea of mystery. In a further important sequence of recent articles, Houben takes up the problem of the *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 1.164, the famous "Riddle Hymn" in the *pravargya* rite.[22] As mentioned earlier, it is a paradigm of a close study of an application of a set of mantras, taking

into account the meaning of each verse as well as its possible placement in the *pravargya* ritual. To summarize, he argues that the Śrauta ritual tradition has selected a limited number of stanzas from 1.164 which belonged to the various episodes of the *pravargya*: heating the pot (Episode A); milking the cow and goat (Episode B); heating the milk (Episode C); and finally, cooling the pot and offering to Indra, the Asvins, and, with curds, into the *ahavanīya* fire (Episode D). After an *agnihotra* offering this was then partaken of by the priests. In 1.164, the mantras suggest the contours of three distinct liturgies, in which verses 1–29 are those belonging to the first liturgy (Episode A, of which 26–29 are the "milking verses"); verses 30–42 constitute the middle liturgy (Episode B); and verses 43–52 are the third liturgy (Episode C, of which 49 is the "milking verse"). He also shows that this tripartition actually reflects the decreasing order of numbers of verses, just as in groups of hymns addressed to a particular deity, the hymns are usually listed in decreasing order of number of verses.[23] It is also important to note here that *Ṛg Veda* 1.164.31 is identical to *Ṛg Veda* 10.177.3, our own verse above.

Equally importantly for our purposes, Houben remarks on the initiatory character of the *pravargya*, which involves the *avāntardīkṣā*, or initiation, that must accompany the study of the *pravargya* mantras. The character of this initiation is decidedly filled with ambiguity, filled with "seeing" and "not-seeing." It takes place outside the village, and at its beginning, fire, wind, and sun are worshiped. The student is blindfolded and spends the night in silence without lying down. The next morning, the teacher takes the blindfold away and asks the student to observe several objects, including the fire and sun, and to recite a mantra in praise of the sun (actually, of birds; see *TA* 4.20.30; *TB* 2.5.83; *RV* 10.73.11). After the dark and silent period, the student can obtain a share in speech and have a kind of new life.[24]

To return to our mantra usage of *Ṛg Veda* 10.177: *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* mandates that verses 1 and 3 of 10.177 are to be recited just at the moment when the pot is at its hottest; and it is praised accordingly in the next section of the liturgy. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* prescribes the recitation of the entire hymn at this moment. Let me remind the reader at this point of the imagery of verse 1: it depicts the wise beholding the sun in their heart with their mind, and the sages looking into the solar orb. The third verse focuses on the protector, who never descends, going by paths to east and to west, clothing heaven and the intermediate spaces, constantly revolving in the midst of the worlds. It may well be that, as Houben remarks of 10:177.3 (equivalent to *RV* 1.1.64.31):

> We now see that within the heated pot that is being watched and worshipped, there is "something" that envelops itself in a fluid, viz in the boiling ghee, and that the envelopings (*nir-ṇíj*) or streams or current (*dhārā*, f.) of ghee are constantly converging and spreading out in all directions (within the confines of the pot). The enigmatic character of this verse is enhanced by leaving the "something" which thus envelops itself underdesignated.[25]

Houben's remark on this mantra application refers only to one verse (*RV* 1.164.31), and he is arguing with other interpretations of *Ṛg Veda* 1.164.31.[26] Yet his observations are even more firmly bolstered when one sees that, in addition to verse 3, verse 1 is also used in this context according to *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. Verse 1 does refer directly to the sun, and by analogy to the heated pot of ghee. The mention of the "orb," which could be either the pot or the sun, only further reinforces the analogy. And, if we take into account the entirety of the hymn that *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* prescribes, verse 2 contributes further imagery: "The Sun bears the word in his mind; the Gandharva has spoken it within the womb, and the sages cherish it in the place of sacrifice, brilliant, heavenly, ruling the mind." With this added imagery of verse 2, then, we see that the priest "has accepted his share of speech," which was part of his initiatory ritual earlier in the *pravargya* proceedings. While Houben's work focuses on the application of 1.164, looking at the semantic properties of 10.177 only further reinforces his conclusions. Geldner and Gonda both interpret 10.177 as referring to, in Geldner's words, "an inner light of knowledge."[27] Thus, as Houben also notes, while gazing at the pot one was looking on a mighty being or event, to participate in its essences.[28]

One further significant element in this rite, besides the heating of the *mahāvīra* and the offering of ghee, is that a large number of the doors are closed when this offering happens. The *prācīnavaṃśa* is the structure from which all the other Vedic structures are built; as a result, it is the kind of "entrance" through which the beginners and initiators of the sacrifice enter and exit. Other doors to the sacrificial arena are open, however, so that there is both the possibility and the impossibility of entrance and exit. Moreover, the wife's shed is shut off, even though she sits in it, thus making her present and absent at the same time. Thus in this ritual an atmosphere of both possibility and impossibility, presence and absence, is created.

In this context of missing heads, staring at pots of ghee, and closed/open doors, it would make sense that a hymn that is breaking of illusion be invoked. The rite itself is ambivalent in nature, and so are the

images of the hymn: the word is spoken in the womb, and yet it is also in the sun. The Sun is made visible by the Asura itself, even though Asuras tend to be enemies of sacrificers, and the protector "never descends" from the sky, even though the offering is made from the place of sacrifice. As Houben notes, if the hymn and the ritual's intimate interconnections are highlighted, they are strongly focused on associating the *Gharma* pot (world of ritual), the initiate (microcosmos), and the sun (macrocosmos), and especially the life-principle, *prāṇa*, and inspiration in all three.[29] Thus the movement back and forth from positive to negative imagery is very important; so, too, the doors invoke both presence and absence, reality and illusion.

In the Vidhāna literature, however, this richness and ambivalence contained within the rite is lost. The language used is as follows:

> 4.115. One should constantly mutter that which is destructive of ignorance *[ajñānabheda]*, and which begins with *patagam* [*RV* 10.177]. This hymn is indeed destructive of illusion *[māyābheda]* and repels all sorts of illusion.
>
> 4.116. One should, by means of this hymn, prevent the illusion, be it that of *Śambara* or *Indrajāla*. One should, by means of this, ward off the illusion caused by unseen beings.

Thus the fact is that the unseen quality of the rite is changed. The hymn itself is not a negative judgment on illusion, nor is the *pravargya* rite a negative judgment on the unseen quality of beings. Both the sacrificer's wife is unseen and so are some of the participants as they shut the doors to the *prācīnavaṃśa*. But in the Vidhāna, all that is unseen is meant to be destroyed. In the Vidhāna material, *māyā* is considered a dangerous and threatening thing, not the creative thing, which it is in the hymn. And, in uttering the words of the hymn, the hymn singer is essentially appropriating the power of *māyā* to himself; because it is the way in which the sun is manifest, it is the way in which he can destroy the *māyā* of others. It is a kind of homeopathic perspective.

CONCLUSIONS: REDESCRIBING BLACK MAGIC THROUGH METONYMY

What can we learn more generally after the details of this study have revealed such a progression? First, we can learn something far more subtle and detailed about the history of early Indian thought. As mentioned earlier, all the *viniyoga*s, or applications of the hymns described above, are classified by Indologist Jan Gonda under the category "Impre-

cations" in his *Vedic Ritual: The Non-Solemn Rites.* Yet these applications should not be classified under the same category in the least. It is best not to conflate Vedic enemies into one single concept of "enemy." These ritual applications of mantra address different kinds of potential enemies, related to different moments of vulnerability. The Śrauta enemy expands (and contracts) the seams of embeddedness of public ritual. The Gṛhya enemy can attack just as the householder has ritually completed his most perfect self.

The Vedic enemy is a concept rich in metonymic usages in the ritual schools. It is not simply a case of "black magic," whereby evil intent is uttered, and some vague ritual of reversal is enacted. In each case of imprecations against the enemy, something is selected out of the ritual context of the speech utterance (the mantra) and placed in contiguity (metonymy) with it: the ritual speaker is saying, "This particular action of the gods is like my action right now. And this ritual moment is the exact time in which to say this." In this way, with the ritual moment theoretically combined with the ritual poetry, the speaker is speaking to a vulnerability as much as he is describing his evil intent.

For example, in the case of *Ṛg Veda* 6.73, the properties of Indra's destruction through sacrificial mantra are selected out actually to be used in the Śrauta rite: the verse "with mantras he destroys the enemies of heaven" in fact reflects, is associated with, and likened to the action which is going on. The Śrauta sacrificer is in a situation of ritual exception, reciting mantras in the face of potential enemies who would interrupt the ritual. So, too, in the Śrauta use of *Ṛg Veda* 8.33 and 8.34, a part of the entire image of Bṛhaspati, as the destroyer of enemies, is being invoked to represent the whole of Bṛhaspati in the *abhiplava* ritual. The action of verbal destruction of enemies described in the mantra is placed, metonymically, in contiguity with what is actually going on — the verbal destruction of enemies. This is the case, too, in the Gṛhya use of *Ṛg Veda* 10.166, whereby in the ritual situation of entering the assembly hall with a new chariot, an aspect of Vācaspati is invoked, as the one who can overcome any aspect of those who might greet the charioteer in the assembly hall: verbal ritual or martial. "I have come triumphant with power, equal to any adventure, I seize upon your minds, your sacrifices, your prowess in war." The mantra is linked metonymically to the action taking place. Far from being "black magic," the mantra becomes a commentary on the ritual by virtue of its proximity to the action.

How is the person of the enemy constructed by commentary, by virtue of being ritually associated with canon — metonymically linked with

sacred words through their actions? There are clearly principles behind the selectivity of associational thought, and the enemy is thus selectively constructed. The power, as well as the problem, of metonymic thinking is that it is, fundamentally, a partial truth that can, through its intensity and repeated use, become representative of the whole truth. Thus the Vedic enemy is also always a *partial* enemy — one that is selectively imagined in a particular situation. To take the example of *Ṛg Veda* 10.177 and the *pravargya* rite, the enemy is one that can create *māyā,* and interfere with our abilities to discern what is true and what is not. Yet that is a selective, partial construction of the enemy — a task-oriented foe. In this case, the enemy is not one who can interrupt someone's ritual, or curse someone's new chariot, or kill someone's cows.

This study also has historiographic implications. Recent works have suggested that there should be close study of the changing views of the *ārya/dāsa* or *ārya/mleccha* relationship, in which the "other" is constructed. Madhav Deshpande has argued that Ṛg Vedic retroflexion and linguistic change reflects not simply Āryan domination of the indigenous society, but also increasing Āryanization of the Dravidian substratum of early Indian society.[30] Johannes Bronkhorst has also argued that the "non-Vedic" practices and ideals were a heavy influence throughout the development of early Indian philosophy; he goes on to say that the Āryan/non-Āryan opposition in continued as a "Vedic/non-Vedic" opposition in the late Vedic and early classical periods.[31] In an analysis of linguistic evidence from the Veda, Han Heinrich Hock has argued against the *ārya/dāsa* relationship being conceived of on purely racial terms.[32] And Michael Witzel argues that the pattern of Āryan and non-Āryan names in Vedic India show cultural, economic, as well as language takeover by the Āryans; this process must have involved a complex set of interactions and transmissions between Āryan and non-Āryan societies over a long period of time, in which elites and nonelites of both societies negotiated positions.[33] While these authors disagree on many of the details, they all agree that Vedic ideas about the "other" involved both Āryans and non-Āryans, and that even the word Āryan changed significantly over time. So, too, the idea of the "enemy other" must have changed over time.

The smaller threads of Vedic "others" studied here suggest that we look at other axes, such as the prevalence of certain kinds of socioritual constructions of safety and danger in particular moments of early Indian history. One might want to speculate, for instance, that the Śrauta "other" is so constructed when the performance of public sacrifices was

still a viable and persuasive means of asserting political and territorial power, such as in the early period of kingdom formation of Maghada and other principalities. What is more, the Gṛhya "other" describes a world in which such public boundaries are not so threatened, and more attention could be paid to the development of a religious elite, whose achievements, symbolizing their status as elites, were also their highest moments of visibility and, thereby, danger.

Finally, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* describes a situation in which the brahmin can move about freely, and his options are increased a thousandfold: he cannot only practice sacrificial rites and domestic rites derived from the sacrifice; he can also engage in the application of mantra in all the problematic arenas of everyday life — bathing, fasting, counteracting the effects of bad dreams and bad food, walking in the forest, acquiring wealth and cattle, eating forbidden food, and so forth. The concerns of daily life are no longer solely addressed within the ritual arena: they are immediately and successfully addressed with mantra alone, as it is mediated by the body of the brahmin.

This more speculative historical description is further reinforced by the fact that other portions of the *Ṛg Vidhāna* itself seem to assume mobility on the part of the brahmin and seem to be concerned for his monetary welfare.[34] The *Ṛg Vidhāna* does not necessarily inaugurate or effect this assumed mobility on the part of the brahmin; rather, the text may well reflect and legitimate a reality that might have emerged during the first few centuries BCE. It is during this same period that the Dharma Sūtras and *śāstra*s begin to emerge — socially regulatory texts that are also involved in the generalization of the ritual into rules governing the conduct of everyday life. Many of these Dharma Sūtras contain early references to the emerging practice of consecrating images and visits to temples. These are forms of worship that, once established, would place the brahmin's work outside of both Śrauta and Gṛhya contexts and force him to move, at a minimum, between home and temple.[35] What is more, the *Gautama Dharmasūtra,* one of the earliest texts of this genre, contains an entire chapter (26) that is identical with the *Sāma Vidhāna* 1.2. The *Sāma Vidhāna* is a text of the same class as the *Ṛg Vidhāna* and has much in common with it.

Apart from the historiographic moves to be made, there is a larger understanding of intellectual construction of the other now possible here. These case studies show that the dangerous stranger is always a relative term, continually associated with and defined by what is threatened to begin with. The enemy becomes defined by virtue of what moment he

interrupts, what particular performative act he could attack, thereby rupturing the ritual identity so carefully built by the Śrauta sacrificer or the Gṛhya householder. In the latest, Vidhāna literature, the enemy becomes more generalized, more *in potentia* than described in actuality. Mary Douglas has described the ways in which societies with increasing concerns about purity also draw increased social boundaries around themselves and increase the number of witchcraft accusations from the impure outside those boundaries. As she puts it, "Magicality protects the borders of the social unit."[36] For reasons cited above, we would want to avoid the term magic, however, we can certainly see something similar at work here in the conceptualization of the enemy. The mantra that was particularly linked to a specific action against a specific ritual enemy or set of potential enemies becomes more largely prescriptive of any and all cases.

CHAPTER 6

A History of the Quest for Mental Power

Its sound is O-shaped and unencumbered,
the see-through color of a river,
airy as the topmost evergreen fingers
and soft as pine duff underfoot
where the doe lies down out of sight;
Take me in, tell me the word.

Maxine Kumin, "The Word"

The Gods produced the Goddess Vāc. Thus animals of all kinds utter speech. May she, Vāc, the joy-bringing cow, yielding meat and drink, come to us, sufficiently praised.

Ṛg Veda 8.100.11

One Vedic mantra (8.100.11) describes the creative power of speech, which gives powers of utterances even to the animals — animals of all different kinds. It longs for that goddess, the joy-bringing cow who yields meat and drink, to come to the arena, satisfied with her praise. A lovely image, it is used in dramatically different circumstances. In one ritual, this mantra refers to an actual cow, whose omentum is being removed after being sacrificed. In another, this mantra refers to the ominous speech of birds, who may counteract the effects of Vedic learning in the newly trained mind of a young student. Speech, as goddess, has come a long way indeed from her August cosmological role.

Many have argued eloquently about the power of eloquence itself in the Vedic world. The quest for mental agility, including verbal power embodied in the goddess speech, has been one of the major foci of Vedic studies. Yet unlike the putative account of Eskimo words for "snow,"

this time the early Indian vocabulary for verbal inspiration *is* a rich and varied one. The words for such ritual speech and associated mental power include *dhī, mantra, uktha, stoma, gir,* and *brahman.*[1] As both Thieme and Findly have emphasized, "The hymn is called *brahman* because it is composed as poetic formulation, *gir* because it is sung as song, *uktha* because it is spoken as recitation, and *manman* because it is reflected upon as meaning."[2]

However, a history of how mental agility has been articulated in Ṛg Vedic interpretation has only begun to be drawn: that Vedic Indians have longed for powers of articulation and vision is clear, but how does that longing change over interpretive time? Kuiper argues that the earliest understanding of these complex ideas about inspiration is an agonistic contest, and the poets identity as eloquent is dependent on his ability to describe the mysteries within the sacrifice, and therefore the cosmos, better than any other.[3] Thieme argues that in mantra there is an evolution from formula *(formel)* to formulation *(formulierung),* in which simple ritualistic concerns become highly complex and developed liturgical procedures, more closely reflected in the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta Sūtras.[4] Yet we can be even more specific and make some conjectures from the span of the *Ṛg Veda* itself. In her elegant assessment of this debate, Ellison argues for an even earlier "religious matrix, which arises from a seers' intimate and personal relationship with god" and contributes to the idea that speech is agentive. Mantra is its earlier form, beginning as a kind of vehicle for insight and, in the later *Ṛg Veda* as well as the Brāhmaṇa and Śrauta systems, developing a power as *a pronounced form.* As Findly notes of the later development, its power derives not from the idea that "it is born of insight nor that it is particularly eloquent, but that it is spoken out loud in a particular context." She goes on to say of this later system, "While by design this mantra system rests upon and in fact participates in this earlier stratum of insight and eloquence, it has already moved on to reflect issues that become central in the Brāhmaṇas, the expanding of the techniques and analogical referents in the liturgical complex and the very divinization of ritual itself."[5]

Let us take up the question of those particular contexts of which Findly speaks, and push her study of this evolution one step further. There is more to this development of mantra if one takes into account the ritual applications of the *ideas* and even the ritual *goals* of eloquence and intelligence and their subsequent imaginative associations. We can add to Findly's account by thinking through the ways in which ritual context itself becomes a site for inspiration in the late Vedic texts—not through

intuitive metaphor, but rather through metonymic juxtapositions. Eloquence is joined to other forms of ritual action, such as animal sacrifice, the greeting of the sun, and counteracting the speech of animals. For example, elsewhere I have shown the ways in which the application of the first three mantras of the hymn to Vāc, *Ṛg Veda* 10.125, actually reflects the ritual action of the tearing apart of the animal. The ritual begins with an invocation of totality (reflected in *RV* 10.125.1), then moves to the division of the animal in the cutting of the omentum (echoed by *RV* 10.125.2), and the dispersal of the parts (described in *RV* 10.125.3). The *viniyoga* of *RV* 10.125 is a powerful illustration of how cosmological mantras are juxtaposed with very specific ritual actions. Metonymy gives different meaning to both mantra and ritual action, or to the idea of eloquence and the act of cutting.

Ṛg Veda 1.18: Sitting Down for Soma, Getting Up after Study

Let us begin with *Ṛg Veda* 1.18.6, a small mantra with a powerful interpretive history: "I ask for intelligence from Sadaspati the wonderful, friend of Indra, the beautiful and desirable one."[6] Sadaspati is here "Lord of Sadas," or the gathered assembly, which traditionally means Agni. He also takes up the same oblations as Indra. In the next verse, he is described as *dhīnāṃ yogam invati*—pervading the linking of insights. This is the idea behind the power of *bandhu,* about which Jan Gonda has written. This activity of Sadaspati could, in many ways, be referring to the process of metonymy itself. Here, what is asked for directly is intelligence, *medha,* and it may be that Sadaspati expects this intelligence from the one most skilled to give it, the most proficient in linking one thing to another.

In the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (6.13.3) the verse is used in the rite of establishing the seats for the eight Soma priests *(dhiṣṇyopasthāna)*. A majority of the Soma priests (6) are situated within the *sadas,* or assembly, the shed that is large enough to accommodate them.[7] This ritual usage would make sense in a direct way, in that Sadaspati is the deity presiding over the *sadas*. However, it also makes sense in an indirect way: the longing for intelligence and insight, *medha,* on behalf of the Soma priests would be invoked just as their official seats *(dhiṣṇya)* are being established within the shed. (I will refrain from the usual puns about seats of wisdom.)

The second use of this verse, in the Gṛhya material, is also appropriate. *Ṛg Veda* 1.18.6 is used in the *anupravacanīya,* a rite relating to the study of the Veda with a teacher. It is performed after the recitation of the Savitrī mantra and other parts of the Veda (*ĀGS* 1.22.11) In *Gobhila*

Gṛhya Sūtra (3.2.48–49) the rite is performed after the study of other texts, just as it is in the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (8.1).[8]

The rites of completion of study (literally, the "charge-giving ceremony," or *paridānāntam*) are themselves intriguing and worthy of further examination in the use of mantras for intelligence.[9] First, the students take hold of the teacher as the teacher sacrifices, thus inaugurating the end of their time together. As the student holds the teacher, he recites the mantra that concerns us, *Ṛg Veda* 1.18.6, asking for *medha,* or wisdom. The Savitrī mantra, one that is used frequently in the Gṛhya Sūtras to "inaugurate" a new status, comes second. At the third part of the sacrifice, the mantras that have been studied are then recited by the student as a kind of display of his knowledge. Finally, the teacher should sacrifice to the *ṛṣis,* and to the deity Sviṣṭakṛt Agni, a fourth time. Four sacrifices are thus performed, with the new knowledge that student has gained (the mantras of study) as one of the *features,* even centerpieces, of the sacrifice.

The student then provides food for the *brahman*s, asking them to pronounce that his studies are over. After this gift, he observes several ascetic practices. He does not eat food with salt, he observes chastity, and he sleeps on the ground for a fixed period of time (3, 12, or 365 nights).

After this *vrata,* or vow, is finished, the final rite, that of "stimulating intelligence," is performed. The student stands in front of a *palasa* tree or a *kuśa* bush facing south, sprinkling water around it from left to right and saying the formula, "O brilliant one, you are brilliant. O brilliant one, lead me to brilliance. As you are the keeper of the treasure for the gods, may I become the keeper of the treasure of the Veda for human beings."

The pattern of the end of Vedic study, then, is a pattern of display and restraint: as the new knowledge is displayed, the knower and caretaker of mantra himself is ritually displayed in the act of giving food. There follows a kind of withdrawal, into a *vrata* of fasting and sleeping on the ground. We could think of this as the consolidation of the knowledge into the body. Finally, the body as container of knowledge itself is consecrated, as the student asks that he himself become a preserver of the Veda. The mantra that begins this ceremony, *Ṛg Veda* 1.18.6, inaugurates the consecration of knowledge as represented by the body itself.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* text (1.85), as should be familiar by now, uses this mantra simply as a means for gaining intelligence, for those who are desirous of intelligence *(medhakāma)*. The mantra itself, recited often and accompanied by a simple oblation of ghee, is sufficient for the work. In a sense, the link is much more straightforward and less contextualized than the manifold contextualizations in the Gṛhya Sūtra "charge-giving" ritual. Thus the history of this mantra usage might be from the geo-

graphical placement of wisdom, to the mechanics of its interjection into the body, to the manufacture of intelligence by the mantra and a small offering alone, in the mobile, already-knowing body.

ṚG VEDA 8.100.10–11: CONSUMING A COW AND ARGUING WITH BIRDS

The giving of a related quality, eloquence, is our next focus. In *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10–11, the goddess of eloquence is invoked to yield food and vigor in a lovely hymn to both Indra and Vāc that is infrequently studied.[10] Indra is described as "sitting alone on the back of his well-beloved" (presumably, shy as Sāyaṇa explains *antarikṣasya pṛṣṭhe*), with his friends coming to him, swift as thought, proclaiming his deeds. His thunderbolt lies in the midst of the sea, covered with the waters. Those who fly in front of the battle bring offerings of submissions to it (9).[11]

Both ritual texts use this hymn as the inviting and offering verses in an animal sacrifice, for a victim immolated to Vāc (*ĀŚS* 3.8; *ŚŚS* 9.28.6). Let us examine more closely, then, the verbal pattern set up in this recitation of verses in the sacrifice of an animal. The "calling" priest, the *maitravaruṇa,* begins with a general call, as is his duty. Then the more specialized *hotṛ* begins with more specialized verses, specific to the divinity as he offers the ghee, and finally, the consecrating verse, which puts the "cap" on the sacred utterance in order to authorize the proceedings fully. As we saw the *puroruc,* or the "polishing" verse, there is a way in which this pattern of verbal utterances creates a contextual frame around the proceedings, a verbal skeleton on which the sacrifice can be built.

More specifically, *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* uses it as part of the list of *anuvākya*s and *yajya*s, which are utterances following the initial "call" for the different offerings. The invitation to the sacrifice is comprised of three verbal utterances: (1) the call by the *hotṛ* to the performance; (2) the call of invitation by the *hotṛ* to the deity itself, while he sits for the *ājyabhāga,* that is, two libations of ghee that precede the principal libation; (3) the *yajya* recital, literally "that which is to be sacrificed," the verse recited by the *hotṛ* that is essentially, a verse of consecration.

The first verse, *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10, is the *anuvākya,* uttered as the *hotṛ* is pouring ghee into the fire, after the general call has been made and before the actual sacrifice begins.

> 8.100.10. When Vāc, the queen, the gladdener of the Gods, sits down, uttering things which are not to be understood, she milks water and food for the four quarters. Where now has her best part gone?

The poetic images of sitting down and giving milk and food would be particularly appropriate here as the "food" preparations for sacrifice, here in the form of ghee, are begun. Moreover, the verse ends with a question as to where Vāc's "best part" is to be located: the implication here, with this verse placed just before the immolation of the victim, is that "the best part" found in the sacrificial animal itself.

The next mantra, verse 11, comprises the *yajya* — the capping, consecrating verse that connotes what is to be sacrificed.

> 8.100.11. The Gods produced the Goddess Vāc. Thus animals of all kinds utter speech. May she, Vāc, the joy-bringing cow, yielding meat and drink, come to us, sufficiently praised.

There is an implied identification between Vāc as the meat-yielding cow and the animal that is about to be offered: may Vāc come to us *as* that animal, since all animals are possessed of speech. The "capstone" of the consecration, then, is accomplished verbally through the material animal of the ritual and the deity itself becoming one and the same. Through the mantra, the performer establishes a metonymic identification between Vāc and the cow.

Thus in the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* the procedure to sacrifice and roast the animal is uttered with *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10, which involves a question about the best part. Here, presumably the omentum of the animal is meant as the best part — no longer implied to be just the animal, but a *specific part* of the animal, which has already become speech. The second verse (8.100.11) accompanies the *havis,* whereby the offering of the limbs are made into the fire. Again, the verse *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.11 literally here "yields meat" as the limbs are cooked. Here, as in the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* there is a mutually referential metonymic association set up between the words of the poem and actions being performed in the sacrifice. Only this time, the metonymic link is not in anticipation of the sacrifice, but the act of sacrificing itself. Notice here that the same mantras create different associative worlds. In the first *(ĀŚS),* the mantras invite the hearer to think about what is about to happen. In the second *(ŚŚS),* the mantras describe for us what is happening before our eyes.

When it comes to the Gṛhya Sūtra literature (*ĀGS* 3.10.1–11, esp. verse 9), that same metonymy is present but couched in terms of the rites of transition in the life of a brahmin.[12] Here again the Vedic verse to Vāc (8.100.11) is invoked in time immediately after studentship. It is not, as in the discussion of the previous hymn, done to "cap" the period of study. Rather, it is uttered after the moment of leave-taking from the

teacher. The teacher and student exchange Ṛg Vedic mantras, involving the images of taking resort in inhaling and exhaling breaths. Moreover, the teacher gives the god Savitṛ charge of the student, presumably in such a way that compels him forward. The teacher then blesses him with the Ṛg Vedic verse "The great bliss of the three" (*RV* 10.185), and the student meets with no danger of any kind from any direction. If he hears the unpleasant voices of birds (a bad omen in the Vedic world), he mutters two hymns, the first beginning, "Shrieking, manifesting his being" (*RV* 2.42, 43) and the second *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10, the verse extolling the goddess Vāc, who resides even in the voices of animals.

In this *viniyoga,* the metonymic association resides not in the mirroring of act and poetry, but in the counteracting the bad voice with an invocation of the good voice — and perhaps, also, a tremulous query: "Where is the best part, or *good* voice, gone, now that I only hear the disagreeable one? This strategy is in some way similar to the strategy of Gṛtsamada, who uses the praise of Indra to counteract the demons Dhuni and Cumuri, who have made themselves into bad versions of him.[13] So, too, the disagreeable voice of the bird is the *bad* version of Vāc, to be countered by the good one, invoked by the hymn.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna*'s approach (2.183cd–184ab) is to assume the general possibility of polished speech: this couplet is invoked to give any speaker any time, some chance at eloquence.[14] In this case, the rites are replaced by the strict observance of a vow:

> 2.183cd. He who strictly follows a vow, who worships
>
> 2.184ab. the Goddess Gaurī (synonymous with Vāc), after propitiating her with the couplet, "Vāc who . . . " that person's mouth will not utter any unrefined speech *[asaṃskṛtā]*.

A vow and a simple propitiation has replaced both the elaborate "polishing" of the sacrificial procedures and the observance Vedic life-cycle rituals of study outlined above.

ṚG VEDA 8.101.11–16, SUN AND SPEECH COMBINED

In hymn *Ṛg Veda* 8.101.11–16, the sun is praised in all of its forms, as the slayer of the Asuras, and the teacher of the gods, goddess of dawn, the dappled cow.[15]

> 8.101.11. Indeed you are great, O Sun, O Ādityas. Great one, your might is praised. Indeed you are great.

8.101.12. You are the strong among the Gods in strength. You are the killer of the Asuras and the teacher [of the gods]; your glory is unblemished and all-pervading.

8.101.13. She who was made beautiful and bright, bending down and receiving praise, has been seen inside, like a dappled cow, advancing to the ten regions like armies.

8.101.14. Three kinds of creatures went to destruction; the others came before, Agni the strong one stood within the worlds. The purifier entered the quarters of the sky.

8.101.15. The mother of the Rudras, the daughter of the Vāsus, the sister of the Ādityas, the home of immortality I have spoken to men of understanding; don't kill her, the pure unblemished cow.

8.101.16. The divine cow who herself utters speech and gives speech to others, who comes accompanied by every kind of utterance, comes from the gods. Death has taken her from me, through weak insight.

How are these poetic images used in ritual? The first verse, praising the strength and might of the sun, is used in *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 6.5: in the Soma sacrifice, it is recited by the *hotṛ* for the twin healing gods, the Aśvins, in a rite called the *āśvinaśāstra.*[16] This is one of the basic building blocks of the *agniṣṭoma.* Presumably, the Aśvins' relationship to the sun is being invoked here, and the wish to be saved from death through healing powers is implied in the final verse.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (2.184cd–185ab) the same verse plus its sequel, verse 12, has a number of perceptual and speech-oriented consequences. Recall that verse 12 adds the deeds of the sun, deeds of slaying the demon Asuras and of being the preceptor of the gods. And most importantly, the sun is the teacher of the gods; its glory is unblemished and widespread. The *Ṛg Vidhāna* says:

2.184cd. After seeing the sun one should worship it while muttering the two verses beginning with, *"Baṇ mahām."* (*RV* 8.101.11–12)

2.185ab. One is not marred by untruth even if one is speaking speech which is untrue.[17]

Presumably, this erasure of blemish is about the erasure not only of the act of speaking untruth but also the intent of speaking it. Notice here that the word for untruth is *anṛta,* "that which does not reflect the cosmic order." This *anṛta,* however, is not specifically set within the Śrauta ritual context in which *anṛta* is a primary concern. The reversal of *ṛta,*

which used to be the prerogative of the gods, *ṛṣi*s, and the sacrifice itself, is now a matter of a single mantra that refers to its own power.

In this same hymn, we find another compelling *viniyoga*. Verse 8.101.16 is description of speech as a divine cow, who herself utters speech, gives speech to others, and comes with every kind of utterance. The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (9.28.15) uses this verse in addition to the verse at the *havis* offering to the cows. It accompanies the *anubhandhya*, or cake of the cow—the *anubhandhya* rite being the immolation of a sterile cow offered at the close of a Soma sacrifice. It follows the general pattern of a *paśu,* or animal sacrifice.[18]

In this rite, then, we have praise of a cow, which is also the deity of the sacrifice as well as the sacrificial victim. Viewed from the perspective of the *viniyoga,* then, this *anubandhya* rite is one of the most reflexive of sacrifices, with a complete identity between mantra, *devatā*, and victim. And it ends with an interdiction against killing the divine cow in verse 15, even as the *real* cow is being killed.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (2.187ab), *Ṛg Veda* 8.101.15 is a mantra for obtaining a cow, to be muttered while touching an actual cow. Verse 16 (2.187cd), however, is a mantra for obtaining gracious speech. Here is a splitting of the earlier *artha,* or purpose, of mantric utterance: the first is used for the obtaining of a cow; and the second, which specifically mentions Vāc, is concerned with obtaining speech. The real cow, in this case, is not being killed, but rather multiplied, by the utterance of the mantra.

CONCLUSIONS

How might we characterize the history of this longing for insight and eloquence, the ritual extension and elaboration of *dhī* over the centuries that Findly has hinted at? In our first *viniyoga* (*RV* 1.18.6), we see intelligence, *medha,* moving into the sacrificial arena and sitting down with the Soma priests. We then see the same *medha* more mobile, embodied within the student who is about to leave his place of study to become the Veda. Finally, we see intelligence naming and instantiating itself, for the good of the person longing for it.

In the second *viniyoga* (*RV* 8.100.10–11), we see the verses used in the Śrauta rites both to anticipate and to mirror the sacrificial feast of an animal in honor of the goddess of eloquence, Vāc. In the Gṛhya Sūtra, we see again a brahmin being blessed by his teacher and wishing to counteract the negative speech of birds with his own refined speech. Finally, we see the same mantra as an eternal guarantor of refined speech: when one is at

a loss for words, but one doesn't lose this mantric word, one gains back eloquence. In the third *viniyoga, Ṛg Veda* 8.101.11–14, we see speech as a ritual intensification of a solar metaphor in the Śrauta *agniṣṭoma,* then as a colossal reversal of cosmic untruth into truth in the later Vedic period. Finally, in the *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 8.101.15–16, we see a lovely metonymic placement of the mantras about speech as a cow: a perfect juxtaposition between deity, mantra, and act in the *anubandhya* sacrifice. Later, this *viniyoga* was split up into two different purposes, one for obtaining a cow and the other for obtaining speech. The unifying image that affected the Śrauta application is now divided into discreet parts.

If we are to take Sadaspati seriously, then, eloquence and intelligence begin in the Vedic Śrauta world by having "places at the table," or seats at the sacrificial arena. Closely related with food, they intensify the sun and mirror and narrate the best part of the animal victim. Both create mirror effects in metonymic linkage—narrating and thereby consecrating the action so that word and gesture refer to each other. Mental powers are then moved into moving bodies—incorporated into the young body who has completed Vedic study; used against a bird who might cause danger to the just-graduated student. Finally, we see mental and verbal power transformed into an instrument—a tool that does not reflect a place or a person, but rather addresses a problematic situation.

The eloquence that began as poetic insight, from a close relationship with the gods, moves into a form of ritual expertise, which in turn becomes an instrument to be used outside the sacrificial arena, ready at any moment to counteract the bad effects of speaking untruth. Unfettered from the sacrificial table and free to roam in its own *loka,* refined mantric speech becomes its own means for more refined speech, as the need might arise.

CHAPTER 7

The Poetics of Paths

Mantras of Journeys

Do you know the power of the things that led them, what sufferings and desires furrowed their road?

Jeanne de Vietinghoff

Lead us past our pursuers; make our paths pleasant and easy to travel. Find for us here, Pūṣan, the power of understanding

Ṛg Veda 10.42.7

What does it mean to lose one's way? How can we think about the question of "pathhood" and traveling through space in early India? The image most frequently brought to mind is the one of the *aśvamedha,* where the horse's wandering for a year is in fact the horse's sponsor's domination of the land. Wherever the horse wanders is, de facto, owned by the king who set the horse free. And how much stock are scholars to put in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*'s image of the purifying fire, rolling across the Gangetic plain?

The debate about traveling through space has tended to focus on the Indo-Āryan debate, thinking through issues of invasion, migration, and trade. Yet the poetics of space, to borrow from Bachelard, have not been attended to as closely. We know that in addition to the domination of space, there is the imagination of space, addressed by the mantras below. Like them, the *Kauśika Sūtra* (42.1–5) and other *sūtra*s prescribe rituals for a person who desires that his business trip may be successful. The *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* 1.1.2.4 refers to sea voyages undertaken by northerners. Moreover, chariots were the most popular vehicle, drawn by horses or bulls; and animals such as horses, camels, elephants, mules, asses, and bulls were common means of transportation.[1] Causeways were also made across a river or inundated land, and other Sūtras (such

as *PārGŚ* 2.6.25 and *KŚS* 15.5.13), also prescribe the verses that ought to be recited at the time of boarding a boat.[2]

These ideas are of course related to *tīrtha*s, or crossing places, whose sanctity is evident even from the early texts. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 6.1.1 remarks that the one who bathes at a *tīrtha* becomes a *tīrtha* for his fellows. The person thus symbolizes the places he has touched and is metonymically associated with it.[3] The Gṛhya Sūtras also prescribe that a bride and groom should recite a mantra when they reach a *tīrtha*.[4] And two Gṛhya Sūtras state that a student should take his *samāvartana,* or graduation, bath silently at a *tīrtha*.[5]

Indeed, the mantras to be recited at journeys mentioned in all these texts are our best access to the ways in which journeys were imagined. We can see what was anticipated, what was feared, what terrain lay ahead, what obstacles were in the way and how they could be removed. At a more abstract level, we can also see how the idea of movement through space changed over time.

ṚG VEDA 1.42: PŪṢAN'S PATH THROUGH ŚRAUTA AND GṚHYA WORLDS

Pūṣan is a benevolent protector in the Veda, a presiding deity of earth and at times, even synonymous with it. He leads the bride on her way to her new home (10.85.26); he also helps with the path of the sacrificers at the horse sacrifice (10.162.2–3). As son of the cloud, he is also like earth in that earth was born of water. That which was the essence of the waters became gathered together, and it became earth. He hides Agni like a robe (10.5.5). Pūṣā is also a feminine noun and synonymous with earth (10.26). This (feminine) is Pūṣā — for she cherishes the whole world.

In this first hymn, Pūṣan is masculine and in his foremost role as the presiding deity over roads and journeying. He is one of the twelve Ādityas, or sun deities, and as such has special jurisdiction over the earth *(pṛthivyabhimānī devaḥ)*.

> 1.42.1. Cross the ways, Pūṣan, and keep away pain, O child of the unharnessing. Stay with us, O God, going before us.
>
> 1.42.2. The evil vicious wolf who threatens us, Pūṣan, chase him away from the path.
>
> 1.42.3. The notorious highwayman, the robber who plots in ambush, drive him far away from the track.

1.42.4. Trample with your foot the torch of the two-tongued slanderer, whoever he may be.

1.42.5. Worker of wonders, full of good council, O Pūṣan, we beg you for that help with which you encouraged our fathers.

1.42.6. You bring every good fortune and are the best bearer of the golden sword. Make riches easy for us to win.

1.42.7. Lead us past our pursuers; make our paths pleasant and easy to travel. Find for us here, Pūṣan, the power of understanding.

1.42.8. Lead us to pastures rich in grass; let there be no sudden fever on the journey. Find for us here, Pūṣan, the power of understanding.

1.42.9. Use your powers, give fully and generously, give eagerly and fill the belly. Find for us here, Pūṣan, the power of understanding.

1.42.10. We do not reproach Pūṣan, but sing his praises with well-worded hymns. We pray to the worker of wonders to give us riches.[6]

As this hymn conveys, he goes before the traveler. He averts the robber and evil doer (3), he tramples the evil minded with his feet (4), and is wise and beautiful (5). Pūṣan is also possessed of golden weapons and able to bestow upon the sacrificer riches that can be amply distributed (6). The last three verses of the hymn are a direct plea to Pūṣan, that he lead the petitioner past opponents (7), to where there is no extreme heat (8), and that he sharpen the pots and fill their bellies. The last verse admonishes that Pūṣan is not to be censured, but praised. Even though some of its verses seem to refer to the sacrifice, *Ṛg Veda* 1.42 is only used in the domestic rites.

One can imagine many domestic uses for Pūṣan. *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.7.7–10 prescribes several different Pūṣan hymns: for going out on business; for finding a lost object (*RV* 6.54); and in the present hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 1.42, for going out on a long and dangerous journey. Here the hymn is used prophylactically, in anticipation of all the evil forces and obstructions named in the hymn.[7]

Finally, *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.96 uses this hymn *Ṛg Veda* 1.42 and the same poetic images for the "speeding up of a journey *[adhvanya]*" and as a "destructive mantra against robbers." Notice here that this hymn is detached from the life-cycle rites but is bent to the will of the speaker of the mantra. The hymn will literally shorten space if the traveler wishes the journey to go faster. Moreover, it is not simply a protective mantra against robbers, but a destructive one: it will remove obstacles by destroying them.

Space begins as the image of Pūṣan's jurisdiction; the world of Pūṣan is the world of space and the paths Pūṣan will show. In the Gṛhya Sūtra world, Pūṣan's paths are a guarantee of safety, both in the individually chosen journey and in the life of the child. Thus the images of the hymn become the mental images of the journey anticipated by the reciter. Pūṣan guides the life journey and shapes it. The metonymic link here is not between word and ritual act, but rather the possible associative worlds that the hymn builds up. Finally, the worshiper himself shapes space in the *Ṛg Vidhāna* literature; the links become even more powerfully bent to the reciter's will. The images may not just be encountered along the way, but themselves have the power to change reality.

ṚG VEDA 1.99: JĀTAVEDAS AS THE GREAT TRANSPORTER

Ṛg Veda 1.99 is a small hymn, consisting of one mantra only, and is addressed to Agni as Jātavedas.[8]

> We offer oblations of Soma to Jātavedas. May he consume the wealth of those who feel hatred against us: May he transport us over all difficulties. May Agni convey us, as in a boat over a river, across all wickedness.

This is a plaintive mantra, complete with a concern for enemies. Yet the key word here is *parṣad,* "carrying over or across," which lends the mantra its spatial metaphor.

Unlike the previous hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 is used in the Śrauta tradition, in the *āgnimārutaśastra*. The *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 7.1. enjoins that this hymn should be recited when the *nivid*s, or additional verses to Jātavedas, are recited. *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 acts as a king of sacrificial extension that increases the power of Jātavedas. Jātavedas means "knower of creatures." To review the legend: Indra and the Maruts quarreled over the sacrifice before they both admitted Agni as a knower of creatures and supreme deity. Notice here that, as the sacrifice is being extended, or expanded, so too the mantra used is one of transport over difficulties.[9]

The *Ṛg Vidhāna,* by contrast, uses the same poetic images in *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 as a benediction while setting out on a path, or in dangerous situations, or to cast away the effects of evil dreams. Here, the metonymic link is not between the god mentioned and the god worshiped, as it is in the Śrauta material. Rather than the sacrifice belonging to Agni and the Maruts, the association is between the situation mentioned in the mantra and the actual situation faced by the worshiper. Similar to the Gṛhya Sūtra text above, this application directly addresses the anticipated jour-

ney and asks for protection. What is more, the idea of crossing space is parallel to nonspatial predicaments, such as being in a dangerous situation or having a bad dream. Indeed, this *viniyoga* makes sense when we see that, in the poem itself, the spatial and the nonspatial comparisons are linked: "May Agni transport us over all difficulties (either situational *or* spatial) as a boat crossing a river (spatial)."

Thus, in the case of the application of *Ṛg Veda* 1.99, different kinds of space emerge as an important element of the mantra. First, the hymn is metonymically linked and is an extension of the sacrifice, in both time and space, when particular *nivid* verses are added in the sacrifice to Agni and the Maruts. "Crossing" as such would refer to the expanded procedures of the sacrificer. Later, however, the Vidhāna material suggests that the anticipated journey itself is the referent, and that covering space in a journey is only one of several forms of crossing: others include the crossing out of a dangerous situation or crossing out of a bad dream. The comparison stated by the mantra itself (between nonspatial and spatial arenas) is used in its application in the Vidhāna rite.

Ṛg Veda 1.189: Agni Leading Good Ways to Wealth

Agni continues to be the focus of pathbreaking behavior in this next hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 1.189.[10]

> 1.189.1. Agni, you who know all kinds of ways, lead us to wealth on paths that are good to go on, to wealth. Remove from us the wrongdoing that will lead us astray; may we offer you great homage.
>
> 1.189.2. Beloved Agni, lead us with new joy beyond all difficult paths. May our city be wide; may our land be wide; may you be the giver of happiness upon our offspring, our sons.
>
> 1.189.3. Agni, take away all disease from us and those men who are not followers of Agni; and make the earth wide for us, with all the immortal ones, for our welfare.
>
> 1.189.4. Take care of us, with many riches; shine always in your beloved dwelling; youngest one, do not let any danger come to your worshiper today; nor let it attack him in another season, Mighty One.
>
> 1.189.5. Agni, do not leave us to an evil hungry enemy who wishes us harm — not to one who bites, nor to one without teeth, nor the malignant one; do not abandon us to disgrace.
>
> 1.189.6. We should praise you, Agni, born of truth, give our body protection from those who would do harm and fault. For you are the adversary for all who do wrong.

1.189.7. Beloved Agni, you are wise, and discriminate quickly between those two men; come to the worshiper at the right time for meals, through that which is to be glorified, through desires, like one who is still.

1.189.8. We speak our prayers to you, Agni, the son of mind, and the victor over enemies. Through these rites, may we gain great wealth, and may we obtain food, strength, and long life.

The *ṛṣi* Agastya asks Agni to lead us by good ways to wealth (1). He is asked to make the city spacious, the land extensive, the bestower of happiness upon offspring (2), and to move against those unprotected by Agni (3). He is asked to shine in his favorite place and let no danger assail the worshiper (4), and not to abandon the people to one who has fangs, and who bites, nor to one without teeth, nor to the malignant (5). Agni is the special adversary of those who do wrong (6) and can tell the difference between men (7).

The first verse of 1.189 is essential in the rites concerning fire, used frequently in the *Yajur Veda* (5.36; 7.43; 60.16). The *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 4.13 sees this hymn as the "morning speech" *(prātaranuvāka)* of the *agniṣṭoma* sacrifice and the sacrifice to the twin gods, the *āśvina-śastra* (*ĀŚS* 4.13). To review the scene again: the morning recitation is an elegant ceremony at the end of the day before the birds start making noise. Sacrificers enter the altar through the *tīrtha* region — the symbolic crossing into the sacred world. Notice here that *tīrtha*s exist in the sacrificial arena as well as the natural world over which the traveler passes. The *hotṛ* sits with a twist in his knee, offering first to the *āgnīdhrya* fire and then to the *āhavanīya* fire. He then touches the two *havirdhāna* sheds, or sheds holding the Soma carts, and the two site poles of the door. When he goes to the southern *havirdhāna* shed, he stands between the two tying points of the yoke pole.

Here the ceremony of the raising of the sun is at its most dramatic. His voice is heard before the birds, and his offerings to the fire are seen before the sun. The yoke pole is indeed the center of the earth, and the *hotṛ* sits between its two anchors as he begins to recite the long list of hymns to Agni, of which 1.189 is one. The list is long enough — one hundred or more, without any limit (9.13.3) — that its recitation lasts until the sun rises. He is at the center of the earth, praising light until sunlight appears.

From this long list of cosmic sun-rising hymns, the question of space is raised to an ever-higher level than the earlier hymns discussed. The "paths that are good" are presumed to be the paths of the sacrifice, but indeed given the import and basic nature of the *agniṣṭoma* rite, there is a

sense that the very nature of the daily and seasonal cycles are also the paths referred to. In the previous *viniyoga* of the hymns used in the *āśvina-śastra,* we observed the central role of food (as the priest was seated between the two *havirdhāna* carts), as well as speech (anticipating even the speech of the birds). In this *viniyoga,* the importance of space is mirrored in the basic nature of the *hotṛ*'s position — at the center of the central pole of the sacrifice.

The use of the hymn *Ṛg Veda* 1.189 in the domestic rituals is rather different. It is recited during the rite of *śrāvana* (July–August) after sunset (*ĀGS* 2.1.5; *ŚGS* 4.15).[11] Cooked food and a cake on a *kapāla* are prepared, smeared with butter, and offered to Agni on the full moon. The *āhitāgni,* or keeper of the fires, draws out fried barley grains to the divine snakes (the *nāga*s) to warn them off. The *āhitāgni* performs this ritual for the *nāga*s every night for the duration of the feast and then sleeps on a high bed.

The Agni hymn *Ṛg Veda* 1.189 — "Take us on a good path to riches" — is recited at the beginning of the offering of the cake and it precedes the hymn to the Earth deity, one more to Agni, the steeds, and then finally the *nāga*s. Thus Agni becomes the protector against the *nāga*s. In the fifth verse of 1.189, *nāga*s, as "ones without teeth," are specifically referred to:

> 1.189.5. Agni, do not leave us to an evil hungry enemy who wishes us harm — not to one who bites, nor to one without teeth, nor the malignant one; do not abandon us to disgrace.

Here the paths to go on are those under Agni's general protection, but also those focused on the specific protection against the *nāga*s. Notice here that the metonymic identification is between the *āhitāgni* and the poet; he is asking Agni for clear paths and protection from snakes, just as the poet did.

Finally, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* reverses the prophylactic tones of the domestic ritual in its use of *Ṛg Veda* 1.189. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.148cd–150ab also says that the hymn 1.189 should be in service for someone who loses his way or commits an ignominious deed.[12] This means that an already ruined situation, in which one has already lost control over space, is counteracted by the poetic images of the mantra. This application is similar to the Vidhāna *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 1.99. Here, however, the *Ṛg Veda* images counteract both space and deeds just as *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 facilitated a journey through space and the effects of bad dreams. But here the journey has been ruined by losing one's way, and the metonymic

force of the hymn is in the third *pada* of the first verse: "Remove far from us the wrong that would force us astray." Space has already become confusing and led the traveler into a difficult spot. Agni's removal of those forces would reorder space.

Thus the hymn application of *Ṛg Veda* 1.189 leads us on a rather dramatic path. The first notion of space could not be more centered, organizing the sunrise by the *yūpa* pole. It is expansive and energetic. The second image takes place at moonrise and propitiates Agni against the snakelike forces that would come within; it is contractive and anxious about danger. In the third *viniyoga,* the images are used in an already lost situation, whereby spatial calamity must not only be averted, but reversed. The metonymic associations move from the speaker as central of the universe to the speaker needing protection; the speaker is decentered entirely.

ṚG VEDA 3.45: INDRA'S METAPHORS

Through a series of compelling metaphors the hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 3.45, celebrates Indra's liberating actions.[13]

> 3.45.1. Come, Indra, with horses who have hair like the feathers of a peacock. Let no one hold you back, as one throwing snares catches a bird. Pass them by as one would a desert.
>
> 3.45.2. Indra is the eater of Vṛtra, the cloud-breaker, the sender of the waters, the demolisher of towns; Indra has mounted his chariot to urge his horses toward us.
>
> 3.45.3. You preserve wisdom, deep as the sea, many as the cows; as cows spurred on by a good herdsman, like streams flow into the sea.
>
> 3.45.4. Grant us riches, which will make us safe, like a portion on maturity. Indra, send down upon us enough wealth, as a staff brings down the ripe fruit of a tree.
>
> 3.45.5. You have wealth; you are the lord of heaven, famous and blessed. May you, who are praised by many, increasing in strength, be a giver of food to us.

In verse 1, Indra is asked to come with his retinue, with no people stopping him "as throwing snares catch a bird," and "like a desert pass them by." Indra has mounted his chariot to come to the presence of the worshiper, cloud-breaker, Vṛtra-devourer, and demolisher of cities (2). Indra cherishes the sacrificer like one does the deep seas, or like a herd

man cherishes the cows; as cows cherish fodder and rivulets flow into the sea (3). Indra is asked to grant riches as a staff brings down ripe fruit from a tree (4); his opulence, lordship, and vigor are renowned (5). All the metaphors in this poem compare Indra's movement to other natural elements that move easily: a snare catching a bird, a staff bringing down fruit from a tree.

According to *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 9.5.9, this hymn is sung in the sacrifice called the *śoḍaśin*—a Soma sacrifice dedicated to Indra.[14] It is sung when the sacrificer takes a draught of Soma after the praise *(ukthya)* has finished. Thus the metonymic connection would imply that the ease of drinking and accessibility of Soma is similar to Indra's actions of bringing wealth and food in the hymn. Just as the fruit of the tree is shaken easily, so too Indra brings the Soma sacrificer to drink.

In addition, hymn *Ṛg Veda* 3.45 is sung in the *abhiplava* ceremony, which is also a Soma ceremony lasting six days and consisting of four *ukthya*s; or combined chanted *stotra*s and recited *śastra*s. Thus the intensive praise session is surrounded on both sides by an *agniṣṭoma* and is carried out almost entirely by the *hotraka*s, or reciters responsible for Ṛg Vedic recitations. *Ṛg Veda* 3.45 is one among many hymns of praise, taking its role at the center of praise for Indra.

In the domestic rituals, the Gṛhya Sūtras use this hymn in the delightful *samvartana* ceremony when the student has performed his duties and wishes to go away. While there is an additional ceremony marking the end of study for each year, this ceremony is different. It is done at the end of all study, when the student has decided to lead the life of a householder. As *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.10.1–7 puts it, "When a student takes leave of his teacher, he should pronounce his teacher's name, and say, 'Sir, from now on I will lead the life of a householder.' After the name he should speak with a loud voice. Then he should murmur the mantra in a low voice, 'Of inhalation and exhalation.'" Then he should speak *Ṛg Veda* 3.45: "Come here, O Indra, with your sweet sounding horses." Then the teacher should murmur, "For exhalation and exhalation I, the wide extended one, resort to you. To the god Savitṛ I give you a charge." When the teacher has finished the verse, he says to the student, "Om, Forward Blessing," and he recites the hymn, "The great bliss of the three . . ." (*RV* 10.185), and he should allow the student to go.

This is another quite moving ceremony in which the student is taking leave of an old celibate life and beginning a new and dramatically different one of the householder. Thus the student's appeal to Indra, the ease of

Indra's journeying, and the ease with which Indra can grant wealth are all appropriate to the next stage of his life. The student will, after all, be setting out on a journey, and his next main concern is garnering wealth for his household. Moreover, the use of the Savitrī verses emphasize the notion of expanded space—the teacher is blessing him to move and thrive within a larger realm than that of the teacher's household. Remember too that this student is embarking on the same journey where he will need *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10–11, the mantras for eloquence and for counteracting the bad speech of birds he meets along the way.

As if anticipating the student's anxiety about wealth, *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.9–10 sees these verses of *Ṛg Veda* 3.45 as a mantra to be used while setting out on a business journey. Here the sole object is wealth, and the reciter places all the mantric images of the hymn under this goal.

Ṛg Veda 3.45's ritual history shows the change of a conceptualization of space from the ease of Indra crossing space to give Soma to the worshiper to the ease of the student's crossing, to the ease of the businessman's crossing. In each case, space is metonymically associated with gaining wealth but reflected from very different kinds of life situations.

ṚG VEDA 3.33: THE DIALOGUE OF THE RIVERS

This dialogue is an old and highly creative hymn. As the story goes, Viśvāmitra, the family priest of Sudas, is returning home with a great deal of wealth when he comes to the Vipāś and Śutudrī. The rivers are so swollen, they are uncrossable. *Śūnam* is explained by Sāyaṇa as *saṃṛddhim:* effectively the rivers are being asked not to increase so that the wagons can pass.[15] However, *śūnam* could also be "empty"; thus the last verse is a well-wishing verse that they never dry up. Geldner translates *aghniyau* as "cows" and, thus by implication, either that the streams are cows, or the cattle won by Viśvāmitra should always be with him. The verses of the hymn delight in the play between the life-giving waters and the ambitious *ṛṣi.*

Viśvāmitra:

3.33.1.Rushing from the heart of the mountains, eager as two mares with reins loosened, contending, like two bright mother cows *[gāveva śubhre mātarā]* who lick, the Vipāś and the Śutudrī flow quickly with milk.

3.33.2. Impelled by Indra, whom you ask to push you, you move like chariots to the ocean. Flowing together, swelling with your waves, bright streams, each of you seeks the other.

3.33.3. To the most maternal river *[sindhum mātṛtamām]* I went, to the auspicious, wide Vipāś. Like cows licking their calf, the two flow onward to their common home together.

The Rivers:

3.33.4. We two who rise and swell with billowy waters move forward to the home that god has made us. Our waters cannot be stopped when urged to motion. What does the sage want, calling to the rivers? *[Kiṃyur vipro nadiyo johavīti]*

Viśvāmitra:

3.33.5. Wait a little at my request, in order to gather Soma; rest, waters of truth, a moment in your journey. With powerful prayer asking favor, Kuśika's son has called to the river.

The Rivers:

3.33.6. Indra who wields the thunderbolt dug our channels: he killed Vṛtra, who blocked our currents. The divine Savitṛ the lovely handed led us, and at his command we flow expanded.

3.33.7. That heroic deed of Indra must be praised forever; he tore Ahi into pieces. He destroyed the obstructions with his thunderbolt, and the waters flowed in the directions they desired.

3.33.8. Never forget your word, one who sings praises *[etad vaco jaritar māpi mṛṣṭhā],* nor the words of future ages. In your compositions, singer, show us your compassion. Do not demean us amongst humans. Let there be honor to you!

Viśvāmitra:

3.33.9. Listen quickly, sisters, to the *ṛṣi* who comes to you from far away with car and wagon. Bow down low; be easy to cross. Stay, rivers, with your floods below our axles.

The Rivers:

3.33.10. We will listen to your words, singer. With wagon and chariot from far away you come. I bow down to you, like a woman nursing, like a maiden bending to embrace her lover.

Viśvāmitra:

3.33.11. As soon as the Bhāratas have crossed you *[yad aṅga tvā bhāratāḥ saṃtareyuḥ],* let the warrior band, urged on by Indra, pass. Then let your streams flow on in rapid motion. I ask your favor, you who are worthy of our honor.

> 3.33.12. The Bharatas crossed over, seeking cattle. The sage won the favor of the Rivers. Swell with your billows, hurrying, pouring out wealth. Fill your channels fully, and roll swiftly onward.

> 3.33.13. So let your wave leave the axle-pins free, and you, O waters, leave the traces full; And never may the pair of cows, harmless and without fault, become lost.

Viśvāmitra begins by praising the rivers, comparing them to cows and mothers (1–3). The rivers ask him what he wants (4), and he asks them to stop their crossing for a moment (5). They speak of their channels being dug by Indra when he slew the dragon, of Savitṛ impelling them (6). Viśvāmitra praises Indra (7), and the rivers remind him to remember his speech (8). Viśvāmitra asks them to bow down as he has to come from afar with wagon and chariot (9). The rivers acquiesce, like a mother nursing her child or a maiden bending to embrace a man (10). Viśvāmitra promises them and asks that the Bharatas and other armies be allowed to pass (12–13). He then blesses them, "Let your waves so flow that the pin of the yoke may be above their waters, leave them exempt from misfortune or defect, exhibiting no increase" (13).

Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra 1.15.20 employs this last verse for when one is crossing a river. The praise is straightforward in this verse: the river crosser simply names all the things that he wants the river to do. Interestingly, while the hymn itself suggests that this verse is employed at the end of Viśvāmitra's encounter with the rivers, the petitioner uses the verse during his encounter with them. Thus the traveler in effect states the end result of the story as a way of making that result happen. The petitioner is metonymically identified with Viśvāmitra at the height of his success.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* is ever-more specific about these mantric images. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.7–9ab argues that one should recite this dialogue when one crosses a river.[16] After bathing and sipping, one should let go a handful of water into it, and the rivers will protect that person as if he were their own son from the currents of the waters. What is more, that person has no fear of things that move on the banks of rivers, nor of beings that live in the water; nor is one burdened by cold and heat (4–6). It also prescribes that verse 5, where Viśvāmitra asks the river to rest awhile, is to be used when a petitioner is in the midst of a swollen river. Notice the images in this particular verse: the Viśvāmitra figure identifies himself as the son of Kuśika, who goes to gather the Soma plant, and focuses on the river before him. Thus the present situation is addressed quite specifi-

cally. So, too, verse 9 of the hymn mentions the distance the traveler has come and requests that the rivers remain low, lower than the axles. This verse is also enjoined by the speaker when he is *in the midst of* the waters. Finally, according to the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* verse 13 is uttered by the speaker when he is specifically crossing in a chariot.

These poetic images, then, become more and more specific as to the moment when they are used: from the general process of river crossing in the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* to the specific moments of the river crossing in the *Ṛg Vidhāna.* In both cases, however, the speaker is linked to the power of Viśvāmitra. Moreover, in both texts, *any* river is likened to the gracious primordial rivers, Vipāś and Śutudrī, who acceded to the sage's request.

Ṛg Veda 10.57: Viśvadeva and the Keeper of a Right Path

Hymn *Ṛg Veda* 10.57 is accompanied by a lovely story in addition to an intriguing literary history.[17] There were four brothers who were *purohita*s of the king Asamāti: Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu, and Viprabandhu. The king dismissed them and appointed two "masters of illusion *[māyāvin]*" instead. According to Sāyaṇa's version, the rejected brothers performed ceremonies for the King Asamāti's destruction. The new masters of illusion heard of this, and Subandhu was then put to death, or his consciousness was taken away from him. According to another, the *māyāvin*s of their own accord went against the rejected brothers (*BD* 85–91). The other three composed this hymn for their own safety:

> 10.57.1. Indra, let us not depart from the path; let us not, the offerers of Soma, depart from the sacrifice; let not our enemies stay.
>
> 10.57.2. May we reach him to whom burnt offerings are given who is the thread, the one who makes the sacrifice whole, beckoned to the gods.
>
> 10.57.3. We call the spirit [of Subandhu] with the Soma designated to the ancestors, with the praises of the fathers.
>
> 10.57.4. May the spirit come back again to sacrifice, to be powerful, to live, and to see the sun.
>
> 10.57.5. May our ancestors, may the gathering of gods, restore the spirit again to us; may we enjoy the worlds of the living.
>
> 10.57.6. Soma, fixing our minds on your worship and its subtleties, may we also enjoy the blessing of offspring.

Here, too, in relationship to spirit or consciousness, the imagery of the path is used. Indra is asked to help the worshiper to not depart from the path (1). Agni's favor is asked for (2); the spirit of Subandhu is called upon with Soma (3); and his spirit is asked to come back and perform good acts, to see the sun (4). The three ask the fathers to restore Subandhu's spirit, for enjoyment of the worlds of the living (5). Soma is asked to give blessings, and the worshipers are asked to fix their mind on its worship. As in the story of the rivers of *Ṛg Veda* 3.33, there is a narrative contained within the hymn, and its poetic images move accordingly. The wandering spirit of Subandhu is the one who needs to find the right path, in addition to the worshiper who is composing on behalf of Subandhu.

Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra 2.5 specifies this hymn as one to be recited by a sacrificer setting out on a journey. If he is desirous of going on a journey, the sacrificer should kindle the flames, sip the water, go across to the Vedic altar and offer prayers to the fire. When he praises the *āhavanīya* fire, he asks for protection for cattle; praising the *gārhapatya* fire, he asks for protection for the wife; from the southern fire, he asks for protection with the hymn beginning *atharvapitum.* He then looks at the *gārhapatya* and the *āhavanīya* with the mantra, "*Imān punarāyanāt.*" He then goes back the same way he had gone and offers another prayer to the *āhavanīya* fire *(mama nāma . . . agne)*. He then goes on his journey without looking at the fires, but reciting the entire hymn, *Ṛg Veda* 10.57.

In this sequence of ritual events, the hymn is recited after the utmost has been done to secure the sacrifice, the property, and the well-being of the sacrificial fires. Notice that the *fires* are the guardians in the sacrificer's absence, not the priests. Thus the sacrificer, turning away and reciting the hymn to Indra, anticipates the same safety that he has insured in his previous hymns. Just as Subandhu is asked to come back and sacrifice, so too the sacrificer himself should come back and sacrifice as well. Subandhu and the sacrificer are metonymically linked, implying that going on a journey is almost like losing one's mind. And so Subandhu's journey of loss becomes, potentially, anyone leaving home.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* 3.57 simply states that this hymn is effective for "one who has gone astray, or one who wishes to obtain happiness." Thus, once again, the speaker of the hymn is identified with Subandhu as well as the poet, and the generalized act of going astray is reflected in the hymn itself. As in *Ṛg Veda,* space has been disordered, only this time the metonymic connection is with both the reordering powers of Indra and Agni and Soma, but also with the lost soul of Subandhu.

The imagery of a lost soul, of calling back and putting paths right, is

poignantly reflected in the ritual history of *Ṛg Veda* 10.57. In reciting it, the sacrificer leaving home anticipates a lostness even as he sets his fires in order and asks for the good paths from Indra. And the *Ṛg Vidhāna* performer actually assumes that he has already become like Subandhu. As a traveler he has lost his mind and must ask for his own spirit back.

ṚG VEDA 10.185: INVOKING THE PATH ITSELF

Hymn *Ṛg Veda* 10.185 is also a plea for protection in the process of moving through space.[18] It is short, called a propitiation *(svastyayana),* and has an inherent appeal for ritual application.

> 10.185.1. Let these be the great, brilliant, unassailable protection of Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa.
>
> 10.185.2. Do not let their malicious enemy have power over dwellings, roads, or enclosures.
>
> 10.185.3. Let the sons of Aditi bestow eternal light upon the mortal, so that he may live.

Its domestic ritual usage has a wealthy set of imaginative associations. This short hymn is also recited in the *sīmantonnayana* ceremony, the leave-taking of the student in order to be a householder. Just as in the case of *Ṛg Veda* 3.45, where the reciter celebrates the imagery of Indra, the teacher murmurs this verse when he has given charge of the journeying student to Savitṛ, the impeller. He recites, "Om, Forward, Blessing!" and then hymn 10.185, with the images above. Notice in this hymn there is no first-person voice, only a third person, appropriate to a teacher wishing his student well. Space is anticipated on behalf of the departing student, and the roads and enclosures are blessed and protected from enemies.

Also similar to *Ṛg Veda* 3.45, this little hymn is used in the *Ṛg Vidhāna* 4.118de as a benediction for the path itself. Here in this ritual application, space becomes the object of focus, just as the food became the *devatā* itself in the hymn to food, *Ṛg Veda* 1.187. The *viniyoga* is not just the manipulation or control of space through the voice of the worshipper; it also directly addresses the path itself. The mantra is not just for the person setting out on the journey, it is for the *path itself.*

CONCLUSIONS

These ritual applications reveal that there are other, subtler images of the negotiation of space, which are gathered up by the late Vedic period into

mantras used to negotiate space. In the application of *Ṛg Veda* 1.87, the hymn to Pūṣan, the reciter anticipates a lost journey and later controls the journey itself—its speed and its ability to avoid robbers. *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 expands the idea of crossing, from Indra's journey to the sacrificial area in the Śrauta material to the crossing of a journey, a situation, or even a bad dream. *Ṛg Veda* 1.189, the hymn to Agni, moves from the Śrauta idea of protecting the cosmic paths of the sun and the seasons, to the Gṛhya idea of Agni as a protector of snakes along the path, to the Vidhāna idea of reordering space itself in a journey already gone bad. The imagery of *Ṛg Veda* 3.34 moves from the Indra's crossing for Soma in the Śrauta text, to a Gṛhya student's crossing to home, to a businessman's travel, anytime of day or night in the Vidhāna. *Ṛg Veda* 3.3, the hymn to the rivers, moves from general river crossing in the Gṛhya texts to increasing mastery over each section of river crossing in the Vidhāna. Finally, the application of *Ṛg Veda* 10.57 begins with anticipation of loss during the journey, even as the householder sets his domestic fires in order, to the recovery of a soul who has already become lost in travel.

In the imagery of journeys, then, the early to late Vedic periods show a sense of increasing control over movement, whether it is anticipating a journey or negotiating the minutiae of the waves of a river. The imagery begins with the Śrauta journey of the gods to and from the sacrifice. The idea of travel then changes to the Gṛhya journey to and from the household to the house of study—the lives they have left behind as well as the lives they see in front of them. Finally, the late Vedic view of journeying develops into a power of contingency: to imagine the journey is to control the journey, in advance or in medias res.

In the earliest usages of these hymns, the issues of space represent a map to be followed, a kind of cosmic representation of space. In the second, it becomes a reordering of space so that it connects itself to the brahmin world. Finally, the late Vedic imagery of space is used for its potential for garnering wealth and warding off dangers.

CHAPTER 8

A Short History of Heaven

From Making to Gaining the Highest Abode

And these images, these reverberations,
And others, make certain how being
Includes death and the imagination.

Wallace Stevens, "Metaphor as Degeneration"

Where there are desires and longings, at the sun's zenith,
where the dead are dead and satisfied, there make me
immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

Ṛg Veda 9.113.10

The idea of *loka,* or world, is as old as the Veda itself. Poets describe, in equally colorful terms, these imagined places, for humans, for ancestors, and for sacrificed animals alike. The Vedic hymns do not make a systematic doctrine of sacred geography, although they do speak of Yama's realm frequently, and in the later books there is mention of *triloka,* or the three worlds, which encompass the created universe.[1] *Loka* can also be a physical ritual space in the Veda. In *Ṛg Veda* 5.1.6, Agni is said to have taken his place as a good *hotṛ* in the womb of his mother, in the fragrant "abode" *(surabhā uloke)* of the Veda, the bank of the fire altar. So, too, in *Ṛg Veda* 3.29.8, Agni is invited to sit down "on his place."

In many of the ritual texts, *loka* tends to signify the world after death. The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (4.4.2–4) argues that the soul attains a particular *loka* depending on which fire has reached him first.[2] If the *āhavanīya* fire reaches him, he goes to heaven *(svargaloka);* if the *gārhapatya* fire reaches him first, he goes to the middle sphere *(antarikṣaloka)*; and if the southern fire *(dakṣina)* reaches him first, he will go to the world of men *(manuṣyaloka)*. Each will live in those

worlds in prosperity, as will their sons live in prosperity in this world. So, too, the "fathers" invoked at the *śrāddha,* or funeral rite, also dwelled in different *loka*s. If one didn't know the names of the ancestors, one could call them and honor them by their different *loka*s.[3] The *Kauṣītaki Śrauta Sūtra* (125.2) prays that the sacrificer and the sacrificed be granted a place in the *loka* of the seven sages who created the world.

Yet these various basic meanings are not the entire story. In one of his most penetrating studies, Gonda argued that *loka* is not simply a spatial world, but rather *room to exist and be active in, a place to achieve potential.*[4] *Atharva Veda* 6.121.4, for instance, asks a particular binding god to "go apart and make room." This mantra is used in a rite for release from various bonds (*Kauṣītaki* 52.3). So, too, *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.7.16ff describes a rite where the bride unties two hair ribbons in order to distance herself from her natal family, and the mantra is given: "A wide space and an easy road, here do I make for you and your husband *[urum loka kṛnomi].*"

On a more mythological level, *Ṛg Veda* 2.30.6, a mantra addressed to Indra and Soma for assistance, is followed by a request to make room in a perilous situation *(asmin bhayasthe kṛṇutam u lokam).* Here, freedom and safety are inherent in *loka,* as opposed to fear, danger, and dismay. Gonda opposes *loka* to a well-known opposite, *aṃhas,* which can mean constriction, distress, or even immediate threat to life (*RV* 4.20.9; 6.4.8; 4.12.16). In *Ṛg Veda* 10.30.7, Indra "makes free room" for the waters when they are dammed up *(yo vo vṛtābhyo akṛṇod ulokam).* Indra's fatal wounding of Vṛtra also makes room. Finally, the phrase *uru-loka* can mean wide space, or broad space, combined with prosperity (*AV* 7.84.2; *RV* 10.180.3).

In the Brāhmaṇas and other related Śrauta texts, *loka* does not mean "world" as much as it means a place or sphere with particular qualities. Thus texts that express a wish for a life of one hundred years, well-being, and a *loka* that shines upon the sun may be expressing a wish for a dwelling place with particular aspects (*TB* 1.2.17; *ĀpŚS* 5.2.1). In addition, *loka* may not necessarily be a heaven, because in certain texts heaven and earth are wished for in the same passage that a *loka* is wished for (*AV* 11.7.1). In a compelling example, *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* 8.2.5ff mentions that the Atharvans saw a *sāman,* and by means of this they saw an *amartyam lokam* — a place free from death. The implication might well be that this place was an earthly place, transformed. Gonda remarks that gods and men have the power, ideally, to transform any

space of locality into a cosmos, where the earth gives shelter to heavenly forces.[5]

The idea of "space transformed" is significant when thinking about *loka*s such as that of Prajāpati or Brahmā. As such they are not necessarily spatially definable entities, nor do they coincide with any well-known locality. They might even coincide and overlap with each other. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 10.5.2.1, for instance, distinguishes between the *loka* of the verses of the *Ṛg Veda,* that of the songs of the *Sāma Veda,* and that of the *Yajur Veda.* They are, respectively, the shining orb of the sun, the glowing light of the orb, and the person in that orb. Thus they are part of each other even as they are distinguished from each other.[6]

In addition, the Vedic world is replete with the idea that a *loka* is a sphere or state that is exactly commensurable with one's merit. *Atharva Veda* 3.29.3 mentions that the value of an oblation is equal to the value of a *loka,* and it explains that the one who gives a white-footed ram commensurate with his *loka* ascends into the vault of heaven. So, too, *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* remarks that the *sukṛtasya loka* is, in fact, the fruit of good and meritorious deeds. There is, therefore, from the early Vedic period a fixed relation between the ritual acts and the merits gained by them, on the one hand, and the *loka* resulting from them, on the other. It is not a far step from here to the idea of *loka* becoming a means of explaining karma and retributive justice in the classical period.[7]

Although the full doctrine of karma is not articulated in the Gṛhya Sūtras, some Gṛhya Sūtras mirror the Upaniṣadic doctrines of the "two paths." *Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.68.9, a later Gṛhya Sūtra, says that a dying person should think of the two paths: if the soul leaves during the bright fortnight, daytime, during the six months of the northern course of the sun, by fire and light, that soul attains to *brahman* and does not return. If the soul leaves during the dark fortnight, nighttime, during the six months of the southern course of the sun, and by smoke, he reaches the light of the moon and returns to the world.[8] Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, the same Gṛhya Sūtra (*VaiGS* 1.69.2) prescribes that a dying person should fix his mind on *brahman,* and the knowers of *brahman* say that a person becomes identical with that on which he fixes his mind at the time of death.[9] So, too, *Chandogya Upaniṣad* 7.53 also states that if a man venerates *brahman* as thought, then he obtains the worlds *(lokān)* that are the object of his thought, as well as complete freedom of movement in every place reached by thought.

Most relevant for our purposes is the idea that mental focus on aspects of material or immaterial reality leads to participation in certain

*lok*as; one can even become sovereign, "roaming free" in those spheres. In the late Vedic period, particularly in the Vidhāna material, a dying person was also asked to fix his or her mind on certain hymns in which one might attain a high abode, usually *brahmaloka,* or the world of *brahman*. Intriguingly, many of these hymns are cosmological hymns, whose history of *viniyoga* provides a compelling idea of how these hymns were useful as ways of imagining the afterlife, or "other" world.

ṚG VEDA 1.154.1–3: THREE STEPS AS GATES TO ANOTHER WORLD

Ṛg Veda 1.154.1–3 is the first of the hymns that are used to imagine the afterlife in the late Vedic period.[10] It is a triplet of mantras and has a long history of *viniyoga* before it arrives, in the late Vedic period, in the service of the highest abode.

> 1.154.1. Indeed, I glorify the actions of Viṣṇu, who made the earthly regions, who held up the lofty gathered site, traversing three times — he is praised by those who are exalted.
>
> 1.154.2. Viṣṇu is therefore glorified, that through his power he is like a terrifying, hungry, wild animal who dwells in the mountains (or in speech); therefore in his three steps, all worlds abide.
>
> 1.154.3. May sufficient life-force be upon Viṣṇu, who dwells in speech (or in the mountains), the one of many hymns, the one who showers; he alone by his three steps made this wide and enduring aggregate.

What are the poetic images that we have to draw on here? Viṣṇu makes the earthly regions — although according to Sāyaṇa the word *pṛthvi* here could also mean "the three worlds." (The stanza occurs in the *Yajur Veda* as well, in verse 18, where the commentator Mahidhara also explains the word as "three worlds," presumably in totality.) Viṣṇu holds up the "lofty gathered site": this site is, again according to Sāyaṇa, the highest world of truth *(satya-loka)*.[11] Mahidhara makes it heaven, where the gods dwell together. *Askabhayat* is interpreted by some as *nirmitavan,* or created, and Mahidhara explains it as "propped up." His power is derived from the fact that he is a terrifying, hungry beast who comes from high places, and his cosmological power rests in the fact that in his three steps all three worlds dwell. In verse 3, it is repeated that he has created a wide and enduring aggregate of worlds.

This triplet was recited in the case of expanding the rite of the *agniṣṭoma,* in whatever form this larger, "framing" ritual took place. In

this sense its placement is similar to that of the expanding ritual that employed *Ṛg Veda* 1.50, the imprecations against the enemy. A deputy of the *hotṛ* (the *acchāvāka* priest), would add this hymn, along with other hymns to Viṣṇu, in the case that the number of *stoma* repetitions were to be increased at the end of the rite.[12]

Yet the *acchāvāka* is also called the inviter priest; the fact that his charges during the overrecital are to Viṣṇu is probably no accident. In many Vedic rites, Viṣṇu is the "guest" par excellence; his hymns are recited in the *ātithyeṣṭi* rites, or guest offering rites.[13] It usually comprises a simple *iṣṭi* rite, or offering of a cake to Viṣṇu. *Ātithya* is also used for the reception of some stalks, which are considered kingly, or a royal guest. The hymn to Viṣṇu in question is required by the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 5.7.3 as the inviting verses of the *ātithyeṣṭi* rite proper. The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* also uses the hymn during the *paśuyajña,* as an accompanying verse during the cutting of the victim offered for Viṣṇu.

In the *Ṛg Vidhāna* (1.136–37), *Ṛg Veda* 1.154.1–3 is used as a hymn for the general adept to attain *dharma*, knowledge *(jñānam),* and the dwelling of Brahmā *(brahmavardhanam)*.[14] As the *Ṛg Vidhāna* states:

> 1.136. On becoming pure, a person who holds fuel sticks in [the right] hand should daily worship Indra and Viṣṇu, after obeisance with the three verses beginning *Viṣṇor nu kam.*
>
> 1.137. Then one will attain *Dharma*, intelligence, wealth, sons, the increase of Brahmā, and the highest abode of eternal light.

Presumably, the *viniyoga* is based on the connection between the *Ṛg Vidhāna*'s *paraṃ sthānam,* and the Ṛg Vedic verse 5, *viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhva utsah,* or by the words *giristhāḥ* and *girikṣat* of the second two verses of the hymn. Viṣṇu dwells in the highest world and has *created* these worlds by his *trikrama,* or three steps; thus, the hymn will likely be evocative of such an *artha,* or goal in its application.

Yet there is more to be said about the history of this mantra's *viniyoga* if we think in a broader, more literary context of the poetics of performance. These same images are used in an intriguing performative history: Viṣṇu's imagery begins as a kind of invitation for him to come to the sacrifice, and dwell in the Soma stalks: his hymns are those of the *acchāvāka* priest, the inviter priest, and he presides as the guest par excellence in the *ātithyeṣṭi* rite, or rite of welcoming the guest. He then becomes the *reverse,* the host par excellence, presiding over the three worlds, and the highest abode that the reciter of mantra wants to attain in the late Vedic

period. The god, in this case Viṣṇu, becomes the receiver, without having to travel down to the place of the sacrifice.

Ṛg Veda 9.112–14: Soma Stalks and the Heavenly Worlds

The next *viniyoga* is for a series of mantras for Soma, *Ṛg Veda* hymns 9.112–14. The images are numerous here. It might be prudent to preface these remarks with the larger observation that there exist *viniyoga*s for the entire ninth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛg Veda.* They are to be recited at the beginning and end of all rites (*RVidh* 1.16, 55; cf. *RV* 5.12), and certainly in several places in the Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhāyana traditions, various single hymns (cf. *RV* 8.4) are used as praises for the pressing stones.

The *Ṛg Vidhāna,* like the earlier tradition, designates the entire *maṇḍala* as purifying *(pavamanaḥ),* and should open and close all ritual activity. More importantly for our present purposes, the entire *maṇḍala* is said to assure the attainment of Brahmā's abode. *Ṛg Vidhāna.* 3.2b states an intriguing interpretive principle: recitation *(kīrtanam)* of these is filled with merit, so also recollection *(smaranam)* and retention *(dhāraṇam)* of them. Verse 3.3 of the *Ṛg Vidhāna* states that among these three, each is more effective than the other.[15] Verse 3.4 goes on to explain: by recitation one purifies oneself; by recollection one remembers what is highest, and by retention in memory a person who is pure-minded and has restrained all his sense organs attains oneness with Brahmā. Verse 3.5 elaborates: "Having known them one attains the abode of Brahmā."

This threefold hierarchy of knowledge is the basis on which we can conceive of these large-scale *viniyoga:* purifying verses such as these have a kind of long-term effect on the mind. The first stage is basic purity; the second is mental remembering of Brahmā-*loka;* the third is oneness with Brahmā, achieved by retention, or, literally, "carrying" with one *(dhāraṇam)* the image and memory of the purifying Soma *(somapavamāna)* verses. In the third stage, both physical mobility and mental retention allow one to achieve another world. This passage anticipates much of the *Yogavasiṣṭha,* where travel into and out of other worlds is achieved not by passage through lifetimes, but mentally.[16]

We turn again, then, to the specific verses of 9.112–14. The poetic images we see before us are numerous, and time does not permit us to analyze them verse by verse. Hymn 9.112 is a hymn I have treated elsewhere.[17] Its focus is the various metaphors for labor that the poet uses to describe himself.[18]

> 9.112.1. Our thoughts bring us to various callings, setting people apart; the carpenter seeks what is broken, the physician a fracture, and the brahmin priest seeks one who presses Soma. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.112.2. With his dried twigs, with weathers of large birds, and with stones, the smith seeks all his days a man with gold. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.112.3. I am a poet; my Dad's a physician and Mom a miller with grinding stones. With diverse thoughts we all strive for wealth, going after it like cattle. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.112.4.The harnessed horse longs for a light cart, seducers long for a woman's smile, the penis for two hairy lips, and the frog for water. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

Notice the various forms of labor that cross *varṇa* lines: like a carpenter longs for wood and a miller his grinding stones, a poet longs for Soma. A physician *(bhiṣāj)* was not equal in purity or prestige to a priest, but remains a powerful comparison for the work of an inspired *ṛṣi.* Just as frogs long for water or a draft horse an easily drawn cart, the poet longs for Soma.

The second hymn, 9.113, focuses on the idea of Soma as a heavenly substance.

> 9.113.1. Let Indra the killer of Vṛtra drink Soma in Śaryaṇāvat, gathering his strength within himself, to do a great heroic deed. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.113.2. Purify yourself, generous Soma from Ārjīka, master of the quarters of the sky. Pressed with sacred words, with truth and faith and ardor. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.113.3. The daughter of the sun has brought the buffalo raised by Parjanya. The divine youths have received him and placed the juice in Soma. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.113.4. You speak of the sacred, as your brightness is sacred; you speak the truth, as your deeds are true. You speak of faith, King Soma, as you carefully prepared by the sacrificial priest. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.113.5. The floods of the high one, the truly awesome one, flow together. The juices of him so full of juice mingle together as you, the tawny one, purify yourself with prayer. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
>
> 9.113.6. Where the high priest speaks rhythmic words, O Purifier, holding the pressing stone, feeling that he has become great with the Soma, giving birth to joy through the Soma. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.113.7. Where the inextinguishable light shines, the world where the sun was placed, in that immortal, unfading world, O Purifier, place me. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.113.8. Where Vivasvan's son is king, where heaven is enclosed, where those young waters are — there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.113.9. Where they move as they will, in the triple dome, in the third heaven of heaven, where the worlds are made of light, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.113.10. Where there are desires and longings, at the sun's zenith, where the dead are dead and satisfied, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.113.11. Where there are joys and pleasures, gladness and delight, where the desires of desire are fulfilled, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

Soma is the buffalo made by the rain god, Parjanya (3), the upholder and speaker of truth (4) whose streams are united (5). Verses 7–11 focus on the otherworldly images: where light is constant, where the sun is placed, so Soma is asked to place the worshiper (7). This is the imperishable world of the sun, Vivasvat's offspring (8), the abode of great waters, which are the third sphere (9), where wishes and desires are fulfilled (10) and where happiness and joy reign. In that world, the worshiper asks Soma to make him immortal.[19]

Hymn 9.114 emphasizes the productive and protective parts of Soma:

9.114.1. The one has pursued the forms of the purifying juices — they say that he will be rich in children, whoever has focused his mind on you, O Soma. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.114.2. Ṛṣi Kaśyapa, increasing your songs through the praises of the makers of mantra, honor king Soma, who was born as lord of the plants! O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.114.3. There are seven world poles with different suns, seven *hotṛ*s are the sacrificial priests. The seven gods of Ādityas, protect us with them, O Soma! O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

9.114.4. The sacrifice that is cooked for you, king, protect us with that Soma. No one wishing us harm should come over us, nor should anyone do us any kind of harm. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

Soma is the one who, when remembered, gives children (1), who is lord of the creeping plants (2), who flows with the seven quarters of the world and the seven Ādityas (3), and who protects his own oblation from enemies (4).[20]

These hymns are not used in any of the ritual texts, except for verse 4 of hymn 114, in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.5.7 and the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 4.5.8 in the *upakaraṇa* ceremony — the ceremony for the commencement of Vedic study. It is performed annually during the rainy season. In this ritual a sacrifice of two *ājya* (ghee) portions are given with oblations to Savitṛ, Brahmā, Śrāddha, Medhā, Prajñā, Dharaṇā, Sadasaspati, Anumatī, Chandas, and the sages. Grain and curds are then offered, and this verse, *Ṛg Veda* 9.114.4, is recited, along with many other verses to deities offering protection for the cooked oblation. Here, then, Soma is just *one* of the deities protecting the oblation.

Intriguingly, the *Āśvalāyana Gṛyha Sūtra* 3.5.9–14 also specifies that this same sacrifice is to be done when one is desirous of study. Then, the teacher should offer it with his pupils (those fit for instruction) holding on to him *(adhyāpyair anvārabdha)*. He should also perform this rite at the end of Vedic study, along with other, emotionally touching rites for the conclusion of relationships with a teacher. Thus these *somapavamāna* mantras and images for protection of an oblation presumably also protect the process of study, as a purifying seal.

These three hymns (*RV* 9.112–14) are recited at a highly dramatic moment in the *Ṛg Vidhāna,* at the moment of death (9.18). The transition, presumably between this world and the next, will remain peaceful; the images, specifically 9.113 and the abode where the sun wanders, the abode of immortality, is the abode asked for. Presumably, if one's mind is filled with such images at the moment of death, movement *to* such worlds via the mind is possible.

Perhaps most importantly here, both in the Gṛyha Sūtra application (the commencement of Vedic study, *upakaraṇa*) and in the Vidhāṇa application (the attainment of the highest abode at death), Soma is no longer required. Soma is no longer needed actually to *flow* for Indra; its use as a substance is secondary to the abode it represents and the *effects* that it has on the worshiper. Thus, like Viṣṇu in our previous text, Soma is no longer needed to come down and be part of the sacrifice. Instead of being the invited guests, the sacrifice, both Viṣṇu and Soma are the hosts in heaven. They become static overseers and places to be reached.

In terms of the metonymic associations of this hymn, we see first the mutually referential, mirroring metonymy that occurs so frequently in

the Śrauta material: Soma is as Soma is described and imagined in the hymn. However, later in the Vidhāna, the associative power becomes one of taking on an imagined role — not the role of a prototype, such as Indra, but rather the role of one participating in the world of Soma and therefore being purified at the moment of death.

ṚG VEDA 10.82: DISPELLING MYSTERIES

Our final two *viniyoga*s are equally intriguing and share similar qualities from which we can extrapolate.

Ṛg Veda 10.82 is a mysterious hymn to the All-maker, Viśvákarman.[21]

> 10.82.1. The Father of the Eye, who is wise in his heart, created as butter these two worlds that bent low. As soon as their ends had been made fast in the east, at that moment sky and earth moved far apart.
>
> 10.82.2. The All-Maker is vast in mind and vast in strength. He is the one who forms, who sets in order, and who is the highest image. Their prayers together with the drink they have offered give them joy there where, they say, the One dwells beyond the seven sages.
>
> 10.82.3. Our father, who created and set in order and knows all forms, all worlds, who all alone gave names to the gods, he is the one to whom all other creatures come to ask questions.
>
> 10.82.4. To him the ancient sages together sacrificed riches, like the throngs of singers who together made these things that have been created, when the realm of light was still immersed in the realm without light.
>
> 10.82.5. That which is beyond the sky and beyond this earth, beyond the gods and the Asuras — what was that first embryo that the waters received, where all the gods together saw it?
>
> 10.82.6. He was the one whom the waters received as the first embryo, when all the gods came together. On the navel of the Unborn was set the One on whom all creatures rest.
>
> 10.82.7. You cannot find him who created these creatures; another has come between you. Those who recite the hymns are glutted with the pleasures of life; they wandered about wrapped up in mist and stammering nonsense.

He is praised as the creator who works with butter (1), who separates the earth (2), who gets to answer questions (3), who receives the sages' sacrifice (4), and who was received as the first embryo (6). In verse 7 we see, "You cannot find him who created these creatures. Another has come between you. Those who recite the hymns are bloated with pleas-

ures of life; they wander about wrapped up in mist and stammering nonsense."

This one verse, filled with praise of creation of Viśvákarman, a sense of separation from Viśvákarman, and a critique of the reciters of mantras, is used to attain nothing less than the world of Brahmā. Here, in this application, there is no necessity of it being recited at the moment of death. The *Ṛg Vidhāna* 3.75 states, if one removes all stains, then one is able to attain this Brahmā world, presumably even while living.[22]

What does this image afford? It seems that it achieves clarity, a longing for the *opposite* of the mists that are part of the complicated sacrificer's world. Moreover, there is a longing for the discovery of him who cannot be found, as the creator of this world; Viśvákarman is mysterious and recoverable only through the world of Brahmā. Notice here too the powerful metonymic linkage between the act of creation of Viśvákarman and the world of Brahmā. The reciter imagines himself in that world by returning to the first embryo.

ṚG VEDA 10.129: THE GOOD PHILOSOPHICAL DEATH

One final hymn's *viniyoga* also shows the intriguing mental imagery used for the attainment of the other world. Like the hymn to Viśvákarman, *Ṛg Veda* 10.129 is one of the most famous "philosophical" hymns of the *Ṛg Veda,* and I need hardly to review its imagery here.[23]

> 10.129.1. There was neither nonexistence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred? Where? In whose protection? Was there water, bottomlessly deep?
>
> 10.129.2. There was neither death nor immortality then. There was no distinguishing sign of night nor of day. That one breathed, windless, by its own impulse. Other than that there was nothing beyond.
>
> 10.129.3. Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning; with no distinguishing sign, all this was water. The life force that was covered with emptiness, that one arose through the power of heat.
>
> 10.129.4. Desire came upon that one in the beginning; that was the first seed of mind. Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence in nonexistence.
>
> 10.129.5. Their cord was extended across. Was there below? Was there above? There were seed-placers; there were powers. There was impulse beneath; there was giving forth above.

> 10.129.6. Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterward, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?
>
> 10.129.7. Whence this creation has arisen — perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not — the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows — or perhaps he does not know.

Here, the poet questions what the realms were (1); he wonders about the time when there was neither death nor immortality, nor light nor day, only the presence of the one breathing by its own impulse (2); he asserts that creation emerges from darkness through the power of heat (3); he knows that darkness was the first seed of mind, creating the bond of *sat* from *asat* (4); he narrates how the cords and seed-placers participated in creation (5); and he asks whence the creation arose — and asserts the mysteriousness of one who sits in highest heaven, who may *not* know (6–7). Notice here that Prajāpati is not named once in this hymn; he is cultivated with an air of mystery just as Viśvákarman is. He is unattainable, beyond reach, perhaps even beyond knowledge.

In *Ṛg Vidhāna* 4.44cd–45ab one is intent on *yoga*. One mutters the entirety of this hymn, and within twelve years, one attains the abode of Prajāpati.[24] Like the Viśvákarman hymn, the abode is achieved through the statements of mystery, remove, unattainability, and lack of knowing. Viśvákarman and Prajāpati's abodes are separate, unknown; something has come between the worshiper and them. Perhaps they know and perhaps they do not, but nonetheless the hymns are replete with cosmic self-critique. Yet this very cloudiness, doubt, and remoteness are the metonymic vehicles for arrival at the abode of the god. By imagining oneself there as witness and giver of praise of the acts of creation, one takes on the role of an inhabitant of those worlds.

CONCLUSIONS: DEATH AND THE IMAGERY OF CREATION

In terms of retelling Indian history, we can learn that early to late Vedic perspective shows an imagery of increasing distance and remoteness in its depiction of the afterworld. Moreover, the Vedic perspective may or may not include the mediation of death in order to attain that otherworld. This short interpretive history thus gives an answer to the age-old question that my students ask: Do you have to die to attain oneness with *brahman?* The answer, from late Vedic perspective, is "absolutely not, although death is one path through which one can go."

The imagery of the god coming down to receive one, in one mantra, as the invited one by the "deputy *hotṛ*" (*acchāvāka)* priest, as in *Ṛg Veda* 1.154.1–3, becomes the representative of the world to be traveled to by the pure one, who can do so without the mediation of death. The god becomes the receiver of the one who has achieved, by his own asceticism and purity, the eternal abode. Second, from our discussion of the *soma-pavamāna* hymns, specifically 9.112–14, we can see the hierarchy of recitation, recollection, and retention set up; the act of retention takes the same place as the passage into death. With 1.154 one can simply attain *brahmaloka* with mental effort, with the purifying Soma verses *(soma-pavamāna);* with mental effort at death one can attain such a world. In the late Vedic period, mental exertion and death are equal in their ability to take one to the next abode.

Even in the Ṛg Vedic images where there are no intervening *viniyoga*s, the movement into the otherworld, as we have seen in *Ṛg Veda* 10.82 and 10.129, is part of a larger ascetic regimen one must go through. The metonymic associations here are not mutually referential, as they tend to be in the Śrauta Sūtras, but rather prototypical, returning to the best and most original examples of the category of world creation. These involve the deliberate invocation of mystery and remove. Viśvákarman is the alternative to the problematic, cloud- and doubt-filled sacrificing of the *laukika* abode, but he remains separate, mysterious, and hard to reach. So, too, the abode of Prajāpati is achieved through intense *yoga* and is characterized as separate, mysterious, and hard to reach.

What larger contribution can this data, which for me is the most fascinating, give us to the bigger picture? First, we see that the attainment of the otherworld is, in effect, no different than the exertion required in the sacrifice, or in the attainment of another, worldly *(laukika)* goal such as wealth or the vanquishing of one's enemies. In this sense these metonymic relationships reflect the ideas of Carol Zaleski, who argues that afterlife or near-death experiences tend to utilize the imagery of the present world in order to facilitate the transition to the next.[25] Vedic material shows the contemporary worldview of the Vedic person who is alive in this world and uses that world to imagine the next. Just as the Vedic petitioner longs for a world of room in which to roam and become active, so too the world represents that.

However, in contrast to Zaleski's idea that the next world can represent a compensation or even resolution of unresolved elements in this life, the attainment of the otherworld is hardly compensatory in any way. It is filled with the prerequisites of *yoga,* restraint, and mental exertion of

various kinds. It is like any other journey; moreover, it is not at all comforting, but mysterious and filled with inaccessible wonder. The mental concentration necessary to attain a world, even as the Atharvans did, to physically transform a world, involves returning to nothing less than creation itself. Attaining a world is thus a radically creative act.

Finally, these examples teach us that the otherworld is not simply the end point of death. Death is rendered just one among many of the processes of attaining the otherworld. This perhaps is the most important contribution that this small study of Vedic perspectives on the afterlife can make to theories of the otherworld: that death itself is only one passageway toward that "created space" we call *loka.*

Conclusions

Laughter and the Creeper Mantra

I am uncertain whether the perception
Applied on earth to those that were myths
In every various sense, ought not to be
 preferred
To an untried perception applied
In heaven. But I have no choice.

Wallace Stevens, "Lytton Strachey,
Also, Enters into Heaven"

At one point in the *sattra* of 1999, the year-long *somayajña* in Gangakhed, Maharashtra, it was an appropriate moment to perform the creeper or serpent mantra, the verses to the serpent queen, Sarparājñī (*RV* 10.189). As they chanted the mantra, the priests tied their *dhoti*s one to another in a long line and move around the sacrificial arena like a creeping vine or snake.[1] As the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 5.23, as well as the *Śāṅkhāyana* 10.13.26 and *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 8.13.3–6, states, all the different priests creep together, chanting the verses to the serpent queen: "This moving many-colored one has come; he has sat down before his mother in the east, and goes on to his father heaven."[2]

Despite its cosmic solemnity, in 1999 the procedure erupted in howls of laughter as the priests moved around, occasionally tumbling over as they chanted, righting themselves to find the right place, and then moving forward again. This was a case where the metonymic juxtaposition between mantra and its referent was self-created; there needed to be a creeper to refer to, and so there was, a human made one. The irony and the sense of humor about the interpretive act of being a creeper gave the performers a sense of lightness about their task and an acknowledgment of the constructed nature of their metonymic endeavors in linking word and meaning.

The laughter of the mantra to the queen of snakes, with everyone creeping, impossibly tied to one another, struck me in a powerful way: such juxtapositions between word and act, the *viniyogas* of Vedic performance, can be self-conscious and creative human acts of interpretation. They can act not simply as mechanical equations (the earlier understanding of magic), but as frameworks of possibility, suggestions for creating a world. It is time to gather up the threads and return to all the *viniyoga*-makers — the businessman in Varanasi chanting the *Gītā,* the priests chanting the serpent mantra, and the *hotṛ* chanting before the birds at sunrise. What can they tell us more broadly about early India, about ritual, about poetry? The case studies give rise to a number of insights that might add a new, small strand of thought, and a slightly different kind of intellectual history, to the huge tapestry of Vedic interpretation that has been woven over the centuries.

ON THE CHANGING ROLE OF RECITED CANON

In my previous work, I commented on the ways in which narrative itself, particularly narratives about the compositions of Vedic hymns, could act as a form of canonical commentary. There was a great debate in early Indological scholarship about where the Ṛg Vedic hymns belonged. This was called the *"itihāsa/ākhyāna* controversy*":* Were the narratives attached to Vedic hymns the "original" framework from which the hymns emerged, or were they later accretions? The debate may never be resolved, but it brings up the role of the shape of the canon, and how it is inserted into our daily lives.

The case studies here show the ways in which ritual application, too, can be an index for changing attitudes to canon. As I suggested throughout, in this mode of "ritual commentary," a part of an oral text is associatively linked to the whole of an action, thus confirming and imagining that action as it is being performed. In this sense commentary is not simply a discursive act, but rather a deeply formative one, ritually constructive of persons, of actors who comment. It is a kind of "commentary of action."[3] As Rene Gothoni puts it, "Religious commentary is the intellectual activity containing unceasing re-reading, reflecting and reviewing the testimonies of sacred traditions. . . . In this form of activity, commentary becomes a faculty to be cultivated."[4]

Thus, as we have done in the Vedic case of applying mantras about eating, enemies, eloquence, traveling, and attaining another world, we are no longer simply analyzing magical compositions. We have per-

formed a history of those selective principles by looking at the metonymical process involving the same image over time. This is more than a kind of *receptionsgeschichtliche,* the study of the history of the reception of particular ideas and concepts; it is a study of what forms the commentator chooses to stress about that image, in the image's almost infinite power to suggest something about the social self, what French theorist Louis Marin calls "les régimes and les registres variés de ses pouvoirs."[5]

The metonymic principle suggests humans are social actors linking themselves, constructing themselves, in the act of commenting on the canonical images that inform their lives. The man who recites *Gītā bhajan*s — selected verses appropriate to the occasion — and the woman who recites Hail Mary prayers for her son would have recognized the purpose of the *viniyoga*s that make up the Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras, as well as the Vidhāna. Even the sacrificer's wife, hidden behind the umbrella in the *pravargya* rite, is aware of some connection between word and act. They themselves are engaged in an act of *viniyoga* and would see it as partly an existential choice — a choice of recited mantra that augmented the power of the ritual world around them.

As acts of interpretation in their own right, the matching of word and act are powerful ways of augmenting the power of ritual; this is also what the priest at Barsi, Maharashtra, knew when we turned to the indices of the Śaunakīya school — the ones that emphasize the mental imagery of the sacrifice — as a way of making the Vedic hymns come alive for his students. Bringing the gods to mind was paramount if the movements of the body are going to have any power at all.

Of course, this is not the mantras' only ritual power, nor perhaps even their primary power, as Staal and others have pointed out. Their sound, their form, and their ability to be mathematically substituted in a kind of ritual architecture might well be their dominant characteristic in some sacrificial performances. However, much Vedic textual material and Staal's film itself suggest that the use of imagery within the mantra is also crucial to the ritual. It may not always be dominant, or even visible, and it might be accessible only to a small source of elites who know the meaning of the mantras, but it is there nonetheless.

Further, we cannot say that the associative possibilities suggested by these *viniyoga*s exactly reflected the intentions of those who composed the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna materials. Nor would we want to suggest that, as this would imply a return to the mechanical universe of rote performance. The brilliance of these composers of "dry" ritual manuals is their capacity to align, to juxtapose, fruitfully. This, too, was Walter

Benjamin's perspective — that the insights provided by the juxtaposition of two elements could at times be more fruitful than a full-blown expository interpretation. The juxtaposition also allowed for the freedom of the interpreter to make moves not dictated solely by the intentions of the first composers. In our case studies, the cosmological and ritual possibilities of the *viniyoga* were so rich because they were so varied: at one stage, one longed for eloquence and recited the right mantra for it, because the mantra matched the deity to whom one was sacrificing; at another stage, one longed for eloquence because the speech of the world had been slightly marred by the imperfect and potentially harmful speech of a bird, and so on.

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF VEDIC INDIA

The role of the recited canon of the Veda also gives us a new perspective on ritual history and, by implication, the socioreligious history of early India. We tell a story to ourselves that involves the emergence of the Upaniṣads from the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas, where the themes addressed in this book — digestion, enemies, speech, travel, and movement across worlds — is mapped onto the mediating body and made indexical to the larger referent of *brahman*. The *prāṇāgnihotra,* the sacrifice of the breath, which Heesterman has treated so incisively, becomes the new paradigm in this process of internalization. As Heesterman puts it, this emancipates the sacrificers from society, performing the food sacrifice without any outside help or reciprocity. He can thus stay in society while maintaining this independence from it. As "the end station" of Vedic ritualism, "all oppositions — *dīkṣita* and sacrificer, giver and recipient, world and transcendence, have been drawn together and fused in the single sacrificer."[6] The sacrificing urban elite is an object of rebellion, or at least of differentiation, and a world of philosophical, existential transformation occurs in the new narratives of meditation and liberation. Yet while it may be the end point of a tradition, is it historically the end of Vedic imaginings?

In this narrative, we should acknowledge all the while that the sacrifices were still happening, and the old ways still existed while the *āśrama* Upaniṣadic ways emerged. Patrick Olivelle has suggested that these sacrificial old ways incorporated the new renunciatory practices into themselves, whereby renunciation into the forest no longer threatened to replace the old system, but was incorporated into stages of life. As he writes, "The *āśrama* system was created as a structure for inclusion — for

finding a place within the Brāhmaṇical world to ideologies and ways of life that challenged many of the central doctrines and values of that world. The classical system in special ways was intended to blunt the opposition between the two value systems — the one centered around the married householder and the other around the celibate ascetic."[7] Olivelle goes on to make the significant point that, contrary to the usual Indological view, this tension was never fully resolved.

THE IMAGINATION OF THE BRAHMINS WHO KEPT SACRIFICING

Part of what it would mean to take Olivelle's point seriously is to remember that there may never have been a single unified system. Thus we frequently do not stop to ask what else happened in this "older" system that existed side by side with the Upaniṣadic world. The case studies in this book can help us complete that story that Olivelle has so helpfully begun. In the older system, the canon of the sacrifice was not superceded by a unifying principal; rather it began to move from a canon reflective of the world, to one that facilitated movement though a life cycle, to one whose power existed in sheer potentiality. The change in interpretive strategy, then, from Śrauta Sūtras to the Gṛhya Sūtras to the *Ṛg Vidhāna* is one of generalization from sacrificial situations to ones that include any and all possible circumstances in which the verses might be relevant. One moves in a progression: from the power of individual mantras as speech acts in the *Ṛg Veda,* to mantra as powerful descriptor on sacrificial action (the Śrauta Sūtras), to mantra as describing some aspect of vulnerability in a new mode of life (Gṛhya Sūtras), to mantra recitation that transforms a potential situation (enemies, illness, and so on) as it comments on it (Vidhāna).

Consider this in terms of kinds of metonymies maintained throughout the book. To review, metonymies (specifically, in our ritual cases) tend to be characterized by five principle elements: (1) determination by context, or "framing"; (2) pragmatism, or the most efficient use of information to communicate what is determined by the context; (3) referentiality, or the ability of one element (mantra/person/object) in a ritual to refer to another element; (4) prototypical models, or the ability to refer to one subcategory as a better example of a category than others; and (5) identification, or the possibility of a ritual actor to identify with a ritual element.

All our metonymic cases were, of course, heavily defined by context and by pragmatic use of language. This is one of the reasons why Śrauta

and Gṛhya texts are so difficult to read if one is not inclined to imagine Vedic ritual. In the Śrauta approach to Ṛg Vedic verses there is a tendency for the mantras to mirror the cosmos. In terms of our typology of metonyms, the Śrautas tend to generate a kind of mutual referentiality between word and act. They also generate prototypical ones, in which, by reciting the canon, actors become the best example of a particular cosmic category. The Śrauta metonymies are what Roy Rappaport has called the reunion of form and substance, where "the self-referential and the canonical come together in a single act."[8]

The all-encompassing three strides of Viṣṇu are the mirror of the motions of the hand as it grasps the *piṇḍa* offering, and the hand, in turn, refers to Viṣṇu's traversing the world. The hymn against enemies involving *māyābheda,* perceiving artifice, refers to the play between the perceived and the unperceived. This state is also reflected in the open and closed doors of the *pravargya* ceremony and in the presence of the wife who participates but is not seen. So, too, the play between hidden-ness and emergence in the ritual arrangement is described by the hymn. The speech that is like a cow in the mantra is in fact a cow, sacrificed to the goddess of speech, Vāc. The space conquered by the journeying sacrificer in the mantra is the one traversed in the sacrificial arena. So, too, the waters carried into the arena are sung about as they are being carried. Each step taken by the water bearers has poetic sanction. Viṣṇu as the creator and traverser of the three worlds is in fact the guest par excellence, who brings the three worlds into being at the sacrifice. So, too, the three worlds are signified by the design of the sacrificial arena are the mirrors of Viṣṇu's actions.

The Gṛhya metonyms, by contrast, are more prescriptive. The images of the mantra order the reality of the brahmin as his own life circumstances change. Thus these metonyms tend to involve identification with the possible actor in the poem, rather than the more exacting mutual referentiality between word and act. The mantras about Viṣṇu's stride help to reorder the local geography in the consecration of a pond, in which plunging into the pond becomes sanctified by Viṣṇu's plunging across the world. So, too, the enemy is placed at bay when a new chariot is built and driven to the assembly hall. In both cases, a new sacred pond and a new chariot are made to be identified with an older element. The newly minted Vedic scholar is protected by means of his identification with Vāc, and the beginning journeyer is made safe by his identification with Agni who also protects against snakes. Finally, the new students of the

Veda, as well as the newly desirous student of the Veda, purify themselves with the Somapavamāna hymns, where the learning of the Veda will help one to attain a new world — a world where the sun was placed, the immortal unfading world as the hymn states. Each existential step the Gṛhya Sūtra brahmin makes involves identifying the change in his life stage with the older, archetypal cosmic actions of the gods — thus, the nature of the metonymic juxtapositions.

The Vidhāna material focuses on the potential of each mantra to address any and all possible situations. Its metonymic juxtapositions tend to be general ones — a mantra with a possible or "just now occurring" situation. Thus Ṛg Vedic mantras represent the *idea* of a thing, a possible power that can be utilized anywhere, rather than a mirror of a ritual act or a means to identify with an existential shift with an older world. The mantra anticipates the meal before it is eaten, or it can counteract the effects of bad food, even before they might be experienced. They can battle even the possibility of an enemy, or an enemy's hatred. They can stand for the idea of eloquence itself in any possible situation where eloquence is needed. So, too, the mantra can transform the journey into a peaceful and sage one at the beginning of movement across space. Finally, mantras about the creation of the world can aid the movement across worlds, whether it be at the moment of death or simply the moment of change in which another world is desired. The *niṣkāma* rites of the Śrauta and Gṛhya worlds are now the mantras of the *kāmya* rites of the Vidhāna. These mantras address moments of desire, aversion, and existential exigencies: they are profoundly prophylactic recitations that make up an arsenal against contingency.

In this context we can invoke the final reason for the value of a study of *viniyoga* — the chance to examine the investments of the practitioners themselves. The *Ṛg Vidhāna* is quite specific about who may use the mantras in this fashion: the "ritually pure one" *(prayata)*, who has extended himself in pious devotion — that is, the brahmin. In the earlier texts brahminical memory acts as a kind of "storage space" for Vedic canon, which, in turn, is opened for effective ritual use. This use involves the application of mantra in both public and domestic sacrifices. The *Ṛg Vidhāna* commentary follows this interpretive tradition in that it, too, acts as a kind of storage space for canon. There is, however, one important difference. In the Śrauta Sūtras the storage space was the brahmin within the sacrifice; in the Gṛhya Sūtra literature, the brahmin's place was in the home, practicing domestic rites derived from the sacrifice. Finally, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* describes a situation whereby the brahmin can move about freely,

and his options are increased a thousandfold. Not only can he practice sacrificial and domestic rites derived from the sacrifice, but also he can engage in the application of mantra in all the problematic arenas of everyday life — bathing, fasting, counteracting the effects of bad dreams and bad food, walking the forest, acquiring wealth and cattle, eating forbidden food, and so forth. The concerns of daily life are no longer solely addressed within the ritual arena: they are immediately and successfully addressed with mantra alone, as it is mediated by the body of the brahmin.

This situation is further reinforced by the fact that other portions of the later Vedic texts, the Gṛhya and *Ṛg Vidhāna* texts particularly, seem to assume mobility on the part of the brahmin and to be concerned for his monetary welfare. Many of the Gṛhya Sutras prescribe mantras for setting out on a journey and describe elaborate rituals for the leave-taking, arrivals, and journeys between teacher and home. Moreover, a large proportion of the "applications" of Ṛg Vedic hymns in the Vidhāna text refer to mantras that are efficacious before setting out on a journey, or benedictions of the path ahead, and so forth. Moreover, the Vidhāna text also betrays a classical concern for protecting ritual purity of both brahmin and mantra from the eyes and ears of a *śūdra*. These concerns for purity betray the fact that the brahmin is more vulnerable to pollution, by virtue of contact with defiling elements in a greater number of arenas. Finally, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* is at pains to point out the need for the payment of fees in all situations; it is the particular point of view of the Śaunaka school that the brahmin cannot perform any mantra recitation for which he does not receive fees (4.132–35).

The *Ṛg Vidhāna* does not necessarily inaugurate or effect this assumed mobility on the part of the brahmin; rather, the text may well reflect and legitimate a reality that might have emerged during the first few centuries BCE. It is during this same period that the Dharma Sūtras and *śāstra*s begin to emerge — those socially regulatory texts also involved in the generalization of the ritual into rules governing the conduct of everyday life. Many of these Dharma Sūtras contain early references to the emerging practice of consecrating images and visits to temples. These are forms of worship that, once established, would place the brahmin's work outside of both Śrauta and Gṛhya contexts and force him to move, at a minimum, between home and temple.[9] What is more, the *Gautama Dharmasūtra,* one of the earliest texts of this genre, contains an entire chapter (26) that is identical with the *Sāma Vidhāna* 1.2. The *Sāma Vidhāna* is a text of the same class as the *Ṛg Vidhāna* and has much in common with it.

We can tell a new story of the imaginative moves of the brahmins who

did not move to the forest, but who stayed within the world of the ritual *śākhā*s of the *Ṛg Veda*. If we think of the *Ṛg Veda* as a kind of technology of knowledge, we can see the way in which its development is roughly analogous to the ways in which the relationship between text and context, writing and the cosmos, changed over time in the West. Just as the medieval texts embodied a Christian world and made reference to that world, so too the use of the Śrauta mantra also acted as a kind of mirror to the world, a technology of knowledge in which oral text and ritual cosmos are matched. In the Gṛhya world, there is a way in which mantra affects transitions in the stages of life — ontological shifts in status. This view might be similar to the Romantic use of the text — not, certainly, in its emphasis on the individual, but rather on the idea that language can effect ontological change within the person.

Finally, the Vidhāna material resembles a kind of post-Enlightenment view of the transportability of knowledge, in which the technology of the office can be transferred anywhere, via cell phones and computers. One is prepared for all exigencies at all times because one has constant access to knowledge. The brahmin who ushers in the classical priesthood is not only a wonder-worker, but, more complicatedly, one who has reconfigured his spatial relationship to the canon. No longer is he confined to and defined by the ritual space in which mantra is effective. He is more like the IBM corporate executive who "takes his office with him." Detached from the workplace of his sacrificial setting, the brahmin of the late Vedic period moves about with mental ease, equipped with mantric applications for any and all eventualities.

So, too, ritualized eating turns into a powerful food mantra, the designer stove one may never use. Enemies are no longer ritual enemies or domestic obstacles; rather, they are like the guerilla warriors who could erupt at any time on the landscape. The longing for eloquence that is the inspiration and power of the sacrifice in the later Vedic period becomes a mode of being where the purpose of eloquence is to produce more eloquence. This situation is similar to existential situation of the contemporary advertising agency, writing copy to sell itself, to advertise its own power with words. So, too, the ritualized "travel" to and from the sacrificial arena in a kind of cosmic map, in later Vedic perspectives becomes like the AAA TripTik, where all stops, bumps, and obstacles are anticipated. Finally, one attains special kinds of otherworlds *(loka)* not by enacting them and building them on the sacrificial ground, but by reciting and visualizing their creative possibilities, rather like the effects of the images of contemporary virtual reality.

VINIYOGA, RITUAL DISSOCIATION, AND THE IDEA OF RITUAL CHANGE

In her recent work, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions,* Catherine Bell shows how the relationships between ritual and its context can generate a variety of change in the structures, symbols, and interpretations of ritual activities. She argues that "ritual is not primarily a matter of unchanging tradition, but rather a particularly effective means of mediating tradition and change, as a medium for appropriating some changes while maintaining a sense of cultural continuity."[10] One of her prime examples is the conflict between Nambudiri brahmins and the wider Indian public during the performance of the *agnicayana* for the film by Frits Staal. The concern was over the possible killing of fourteen goats, which were made into rice cakes wrapped in banana leaves after much consultation among the participants. Staal himself has pointed out the historical precedent for this kind of substitution; the more important issue was that the mantras could not change. Ritual substitution was possible so long as there was continuity of mantra. To put this story in terms of our book, the *viniyoga*s provided the continuity of ritual tradition. These *viniyoga*s were, in Bell's terms, the "living embodiments and expressions of tradition in constantly changing circumstances."[11]

Yet we have also learned from the case studies in this book that, while mantras many not change, their *viniyoga*s do change, and the same mantras are used in different ritual circumstances — even the less ritually oriented arenas of the late Vedic period. We might call this process described above, where the technology of knowledge becomes generalized to "apply" in many contexts, a kind of *ritual dissociation* or decontextualization. As Malamoud and others have shown, part of this process is a matter of *svādhyāya,* or the internalization of the sacrifice into the form of mantra as the Gṛhya world emerges. However, these case studies reveal ways in which mantric images of something, as well as the mantric *idea* of something, can remain as potentially powerful external agents. Even without their contexts, they still remain ritually powerful in Catherine Bell's definition of something which is a "ritual situation."[12]

The continuity of mantra usage, even outside of its ritual context, is best exemplified by Mary Douglas in her article on the narrative of Little Red Riding Hood.[13] Building on the work of Yvonne Verdier, Douglas shows how the story was told in rural France, in the middle of a girls' initiation ritual, which involved a wolf confronting a young woman.[14] The wolf asks her whether she was going to go on the path of pins (childlike

sewing instruments) or the path of needles (adult sewing instruments), each symbolizing a stage in the life cycle of a peasant woman in nineteenth-century France. The story also depicted ritual journeys into dangerous situations and back again. Yet the story became "narrativized"—in our terms, dissociated from its ritual context—and yet remained powerful. Douglas's focus is on the ways in which the story should not be treated as a "fireside" story and freighted with too much meaning. As she writes, "When the context is given, they are not so much stories as little verbal rituals."[15] Building on the idea of ritual manuals as a kind of commentary of action, above, she goes on to observe that such verbal rituals (later to become stories) are "a comment on something that is currently happening."[16]

However, our own approach gives us another way to think of the endurance of the Little Red Riding Hood story outside of its ritual contexts. It may well have endured because of its rich associative, metonymic possibilities. The many images contained within it allowed for the possibility for it to be generalized to any and all situations in which little girls or young women might find themselves. This is not to say that it, or Vedic mantra, has essential properties, but rather the opposite: its properties are malleable enough, translatable enough, to move into different contexts where different elements are foregrounded and backgrounded in ritual associations. As Robert A. Yelle has recently written, "similarity and contiguity are not self-determining categories, but flexible rhetorical devices deployed to complete a portion of the total work of culture."[17]

In a similar vein, recall the hymn to Agni, which enlightens the path for the journeyer in one *viniyoga,* is a prophylactic against snakes in the other, and a general "safe journey" benediction in the third. The three applications are loosely connected, but the complexity of the entire hymn is what allows it to endure the process of ritual dissociation. Its associative potential is what remains constant, so that even in a minimal ritual context, or none at all, it can be an "image" for an "occasion."

The history of the usage of mantra, then, is not the performance of magic (whatever that may be), but the achievement of near-total mobility for the brahmin as the sacred repository of canon, which may or may not be linked to ritual contexts. Hence, such application guarantees his continued status and employment in a time when adaptability to new nonritual as well as ritual situations was key. In other words, our study of *viniyoga*s shows the ways in which the brahmin can *decontextualize* himself. Continuing the idea of brahmin as "storage space," verse 8 of *Ṛg Vidhāna*'s fifth and final chapter states: it is only the twice-born per-

son "who knows the *Ṛg Veda together with the Ṛg Vidhāna* [italics mine]" who becomes a repository of *dharma, artha, kāma,* and *mokṣa.* Verse 7 states that the *Ṛg Vidhāna* — the text itself — is characterized as a religious practice that is highly productive of good fortune and fame: he will have his desires granted in the realms of lineage, birth, conduct, and industry if he knows the applications of the Vedic verses. What is more, he will gain great mental ease.

Yet a final irony emerges — one that might well be worth exploring in a larger, comparative context: the *Ṛg Vidhāna* also renders itself as equally indispensable to, if not more indispensable than, the canon on which it purports to be commenting. As verses 2 and 3 of the *Ṛg Vidhāna*'s fifth chapter also state, the *Ṛg Veda* is like a heavenly tree that does not yield the desired result to one who does not know the *Ṛg Vidhāna;* it appears like an abode of precious gems that is invisible without the *Ṛg Vidhāna.* The metaphors in these colophons should not be treated as empty flourishes; they come fascinatingly close to saying that the interpretation (and, by implication, the interpretive practitioners) replaces the canon to which it is ancillary.

This might be one final effect of ritual dissociation: rivalry between the canon itself and the means of dissociating canon from its ritual contexts. We might broadly explore the nature of interpretive practices such as *viniyoga* in this light by moving beyond interpretation's auxiliary relationship to canon and examine instead interpretation's *competition with* the canon. In the late Vedic period, there is a situation in which, as Michael Swartz argues in *Scholastic Magic,* the visionary and ascetic powers of the religious authorities are not derived from their mastery of the text, but rather their mastery of the text is derived from their visionary and ascetic powers.[18]

Under what conditions and in what ways do interpretive practices and practitioners claim such significance that they usurp the texts on which they are commenting? When a canon is free from ritual, which is more important: the canon, or the means of freeing the canon? And what might be the conditions under which interpretive practices and practitioners refrain from doing so, but claim only supplementary, partial, and incomplete significance?

In exploring conclusions, there is room to go even further than these Indological implications. In effect, with the use of the lens of *viniyoga,* a model of magic has been replaced by a model of intertextual metonymy: Vedic texts show different uses of resemblance for different exegetical purposes. The textual example discussed above shows us that one text

can refer to another, build on another, and yet use the same imagery for very different ends. Viewed as *viniyoga*s, the intellectual operations of these kinds of texts thus become of interest in their own right, not simply as instances of magical thought. As the brahmins of the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Vidhāna texts seemed to know quite well, making resemblances also involves making claims about the nature, function, and privilege of canonical texts (both oral and written) and their authors.

In performing this study it is my hope that such micrological concerns can be of some use to historians of Vedic religion and can also be the basis on which to theorize about the dynamics of other commentarial traditions that may have analogous forms of imagistic trajectories. To take our earlier examples, the Hail Mary began as a biblical ritual greeting for a woman who was pregnant. Now it is used as a form of worshiping the figure of the Virgin Mary as a quasi-divine figure. Even more, it can be used as a mantra against many human exigencies, including the possibility of pregnancy in a world that prohibits abortion. The worship of Mary might be studied not only textually and iconographically but also in terms of the application of the Hail Mary. Throughout Christian history, when is she deemed to be useful and why?

To take another example, the ritual use of the Song of Solomon is instructive. Its use in the Passover prayers, beginning with the rabbinic period, tends to focus on it as a song of spring, of renewal, and of harvest. Its use in the kabbalistic tradition in the Shabbat ritual, in which the soul greets the arrival of Shabbat as a bride, focuses on the ways in which the soul can be connected to God as a lover to beloved. In both cases, the erotic metaphors and images of the Song of Songs become metonymically linked with another ritual situation. Like the Śrauta texts, the first linkage is a mirror image of ritual reality: the spring Pesach festival is linked with the spring harvest festival images in the Song of Songs. However, in the Kabbalistic usage, the images of the poem determine the way in which the individual should greet Shabbat as lovers greet each other. This usage resembles the Gṛhya usage more closely.

We return, then, to the laughing priests and the creeper mantra, where every recited verse and every clumsy movement produced another unique moment for laughter. Or we can return to the delicate *viniyoga* with which we began: the mantra that can "discern illusion" in the *pravargya* rite, where the doors are both open and shut, the rite is both open and secret, the woman behind the umbrella is both seen and unseen, where she can see and cannot see. These *viniyoga*s are exemplary "commen-

taries of action," in which we might glimpse the sophistication of poetic applications in Vedic India and their constantly changing roles. These *viniyoga*s reveal the ways that ritual actors are at the same time interpreters. They must acknowledge the fact and the delight of ritual and poetic artifice, and they must also acknowledge an obligation to discern the power of such artifice at every minute.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. See my *Myth as Argument.* I am also indebted to G. U. Thite, Wendy Doniger, Suchetas Paranjape, Arindam Chakravarty, and Ashok Aklujkar for personal conversations about the sense that such interpretive moves involving mental imagery are important and discernible within the Vaidika tradition.

2. In a related work, "Mantras and Miscarriage," 51–68, I trace the interpretive path of the mantras used for various moments in the female life cycle, including marriage and miscarriage (*RV* 1.23.16–24; 1.101.1; 7.89; 10.5; 10.86; 10.145; 10.162). In the Ṛg Vedic mantras, women tend to be represented symbolically, as carriers of wombs and progenitors of fertility. In the Śrauta material, these women's roles tend to be enacted symbolically as well: they are used in the ungirding rite of the sacrificer's wife, for instance, in the Soma sacrifice. In the Gṛhya material, the hymns tend to be used in the life-cycle rites that women themselves undergo at the hands of brahmin officiators to prevent miscarriage, or stillbirth, and so on. In all cases, however, the woman is not the agent of the ritual: she is "made to hear" the mantras to improve her familial relationships, or mantras are recited over her miscarrying body.

Thus this study moves beyond the usual analysis of the depiction of women in the Vedic period and shows women's actual relationship to mantra, as it moves from a symbolic relationship in the Śrauta to a more literal one in the Gṛhya and Vidhāna material. While Vedic emphasis on the rituals of childbirth seem to reflect an alliance between canonical mantra and the domestic world, the opposite is in fact the case. Scrutiny of the commentarial tradition reveals not a growing alliance, but a growing control over the marrying and gestating female body through the use of mantric utterance. In the earlier Vedic material, mantras about women begin by representing women's fertility; however, in later Vedic material,

in addressing the very real needs of women, mantras also mediate a distance between Vedic language and the female body.
Further, I am not addressing the important *viniyoga* of *Ṛg Veda* 10.85; this hymn deserves a book in its own right, given the voluminous literature that has been devoted to the use of hymns in the marriage rituals. See, for starters, Moriz Winternitz, *Das altindischen Hochzeitsrituell*; Albrecht Weber, "Vedische Hochzeitsspruche"; L. Alsdorf, "Bemerkungen"; W. Caland, "A Vaidic Wedding Song"; J. Ehni, "Rigv. X.85 Die Vermählung des Soma und der Sūryâ"; J. Gonda, "Notes on Atharvavedasamhita"; and R. Schmidt, *Liebe und Ehe im alten und modernen Indien.* In *Religious Medicine,* Zysk has done some significant work on the *viniyoga*s of the healing hymns, such as *Ṛg Veda* 1.162, and *Ṛg Veda* 1.50; this topic too deserves a monograph in its own right.

3. This idea has been implied by many an Indologist, but I am grateful to personal conversation with Timothy Lubin (April 2004) and to his article in *Numen* for making it explicit. See Lubin, "Virtuosic Exegesis."

4. Pillai, *Non-ṛgvedic Mantras.*

5. Tedlock, *Spoken Word*; Briggs, *Competence in Performance.*

6. Panther, *Metonymy in Language and Thought.*

7. The translations of texts are my own, following the translations of Geldner and O'Flaherty *(RV),* Caland *(ŚŚS),* Sharma *(ĀGS),* Ranade *(ĀŚS),* Sehgal *(ŚGS),* and M. S. Bhat *(RVidh).* I give the original texts where appropriate and some commentary where vagaries of meaning are especially pressing. Frequently, in the Śrauta and Gṛhya material, it is a matter of a single phrase with a *pratīka,* or short citation, of a hymn, and thus I usually only cite the Śrauta and Gṛhya texts when they are intriguing for the discussion.

8. This citation method reflects the basic numbering used by the texts themselves; some texts have more subsections than others.

9. Brereton, "Edifying Puzzement," 258.

10. Ibid., 248.

11. Jamison, *Sacrificed Wife/Sacrificer's Wife,* 11.

12. Doniger, *Dreams, Illusions,* 304. See also her discussion of the *Atharva Veda,* in ibid., 18–21.

13. Shulman and Rao, *Poem at the Right Moment,* 7.

Chapter 1. Poetry, Ritual, and Associational Thought in Early India: The Sources

1. Gonda, *Mantra Interpretation,* 23.

2. Glucklich, *Sense,* 26.

3. This idea was developed in an East Asian context by Kasulis, "Philosophy as Metapraxis." However, it can be appropriately applied to the concerns of Mīmāṃsā, whose concerns are about the efficacy of ritual as a means of instruction in *dharma,* or correct religious role.

4. We can infer that there was some greater involvement in the community during early Indian times from Buddhist texts like the *Digha Nikāya* (*Kuṭadanta Sutta* 5.18), where servants and workmen performing their tasks for the sacrifice are mentioned.

5. See the discussion in the introduction. On the experiential aspect of the Vedic application, see also Knipe, "Becoming a Veda in the Godavari Delta"; Lubin, "Veda on Parade"; and F. M. Smith, *Vedic Sacrifice in Transition.*

6. Thite, "Fictitiousness of Vedic Ritual," 33–46. Thite's is a provocative thesis based on detailed knowledge of the prescriptive texts and years of observation of Vedic sacrificial procedures, their timing, and the resources required for them. See also, Klaus, "Zu den Srautasutras."

7. See Jamison, *Sacrificed Wife/Sacrificer's Wife,* for a full discussion of women's dynamics. For *paribhāsās*, see Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras*, 511ff.

8. The subject matter of the Gṛhya Sūtras is vast and has been amply covered by Gonda in his *Vedic Ritual: The Non-Solemn Rites* as well as in his earlier exposition of the Sūtra literature. It is not my aim to repeat this material here; however, some summation of this material is necessary in order to analyze what the differences and similarities might be between the two worlds. Although differences between the solemn, more elaborate Śrauta ceremonies performed with three fires has been addressed by B. K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance,* Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* and others, there are specific relationships worth outlining here.

9. Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 26, 7.

10. Throughout the Gṛhya Sūtras, passing references are made to customs to be observed under circumstances "similar to those under discussion." For instance, the *anupravacanīya* ceremony is to be performed after the study of *any* Vedic text has been finished. And *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.2.48 prescribes that one should sacrifice the mess of cooked food sacred to Indra at "all similar ceremonies" — those connected with the study of other texts.

11. Instruments used in the Śrauta ritual may appear also in the domestic manuals (*ĀGS* 1.11.8l; *BGS* 2.16l; *HGS* 15.2.6). See also Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 6–7.

12. *Āpad Dharma Śāstra* 1.12.10. Sometimes the word *śruti* is omitted altogether.

13. The *anvaṣṭakya* rites are performed in the same way as the *piṇḍapitṛyajña* described in the Śrauta Sūtras. Moreover, a term or prescript occurring in the Śrauta ritual is assumed to be known, and reference to the *śruti* or the Śrauta ritual is implicit in many cases (Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 9).

14. Ibid., 18. For example, at the end of the description of the *pākayajña* the author of *Aśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.10.25 states that the pouring out of the full vessel on the *barhis* is the final bath (the *avabṛtha* of a Soma sacrifice).

15. Malamoud, *Svādhyāya.*

16. Kulkarini, *Vidhana Texts,* 169.

17. See my *Myth as Argument,* ch. 4, for a longer discussion of this issue.

18. *Ṛg Vidhāna* also insists that the *Gāyatrī* should be muttered 300,000 times before performing any rite (2.27–28). In fact, almost all of the sections of hymns are used in the Vidhāna literature for the sake of their being muttered; hardly ever does the *Ṛg Vidhāna* simply prescribe a sacrifice without a *ṛk,* or verse.

19. If *japa* of the *Gāyatrī* is performed 2.5 million times (2.57).

20. And relatedly, a person who is covered by blankness or entangled in misfortune is asked to mutter *Ṛg Veda* 10.71.2 (3.73).

21. Gonda, *Non-Solemn Rites,* 255.

22. I hope in later work to discuss the details of this making of *kṛtyā* (also Sanskrit *paṃsumayī*).

23. Gonda, *Non-Solemn Rites,* 225.

24. Gonda, *History of Indian Literature,* 126.

25. Ibid., 4.

26. See also *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.7.1; and discussion in Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 553ff.

27. As to the Ṛg Vedic tradition, whenever the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* slightly differs from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa,* the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* always goes with the former *(AB)* and the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* with the latter *(KB)* (Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 497).

28. See Peterson's introduction to Sāyaṇa's Bhāṣa in his "Handbook to the Study of the Ṛg Veda"; also I am indebted to personal conversation with G. U. Thite, November 1999.

29. Witzel, "Ṛgveda Saṃhitā"; and Agarwal, "Ṛgveda Saṃhitā as Known to AV-Par. 46 (M. Witzel)–A Review," 7.

30. See Witzel, "Localization of Vedic Texts and Schools," 174–213; and Witzel, "Tracing the Vedic Dialects."

31. Manuscripts of these lesser known *saṃhitā* collections have recently been examined by Aithal ("Non-Ṛg Vedic Citations") and Chaubey ("The *Āśvalāyana Saṃhitā*"), and they seem themselves to be conglomerates of two larger schools, the Śākala and Bāṣkala *śākhā*s (Agarwal, "Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā as Known to AV-Par. 46 (M. Witzel)–A Review," ref. 14; see also Sontakke et al. "Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā," vol. 4, sect. "Khilani").

32. The *Śrauta Sūtra of Āśvalāyana. With the commentary of Gārgya Nārāyaṇa;* and *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtram with Siddhāntin Bhāṣya*. Also see Sabbathier, "Etudes de Liturgie Vedique." A German translation is given by Mylius based on earlier publications: *Āśvalāyana-Śrautasūtra: Erstmalig vollständig übersetzt, erläutert und mit Indices.*

33. See *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* with the commentary of Varadattasuta Ānartīya and Govinda; and Caland's translation of *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*.

34. Gonda (*Ritual Sūtras,* 530ff) and Caland before him have questioned the degree to which the author Suyajña knew the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa,* given some curious citation practices (see Lokesh Chandra, "Introduction," xiii–xiv, in *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* by W. Caland).

35. *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.3.12; 3.6.3; 10.1.13. Also see G. Choudhuri in *AIOC* 19 Delhi, 1957, 9; and Mylius in *ZMR* 51, 247, 255.

36. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 15.1.4; 15.12.15; 15.13.4.

37. Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 604ff.

38. For discussion of this issue, See Aithal, "RV Khilas and the Sutras of Asvalayana"; Aithal, *Non-Rgvedic Citations;* Witzel, "Development of the Vedic Canon," 257–347; also see Sontakke et al., *Ṛg Veda-Saṃhitā with the commentary of Sāyaṇāchārya,* vol. 4, sect. "Khilani." Also see Witzel, "Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā," 238–239; and Agarwal, "Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā as Known to AV-Par. 46 (M. Witzel)–A Review."

39. Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras*; B. K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance,* especially "Organization of Ritual Practice," 143–68; Lubin, "Domestication of the

Vedic Sacrifice." The relationship of Gṛhya to Śrauta is a fascinating and complex one; while it need not detain us here, it is important to note that the two spheres are integrally related. Many of these domestic rites, such as the *saṃskāra*s of childhood and adolescence, were in fact integrated into the Śrauta rites from the very start, and others, such as the house-building or childbirth rites, were seen as more complementary to them. Thus while it is important to acknowledge the interrelationship between the two, the late Vedic period showed a remarkably stronger emphasis on Gṛhya rites.

40. See Kashikar, "Vedic Sacrificial Rituals"; Pathak, "Vedic Rituals in the Early Medieval Period"; Dattaray, *Vedism in Ancient Bengal;* and D. Bhattacharyya's edition of Halāyudha's *Brāhmaṇa-sarvasva*.

41. See, in particular, the *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* the *Āgniveśya,* and the *Vaikhānasa-Smārtasūtra;* also Rolland's *Un Rituel domestique vedique*.

42. Lubin, "Domestication of the Vedic Sacrifice," 2.

43. *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.1.2–4; also discussed in ibid., 5.

44. Malamoud, *Svādhyāya*.

45. Glucklich, *End of Magic*.

CHAPTER 2. POETRY, RITUAL, AND ASSOCIATIONAL THOUGHT IN EARLY INDIA: THE THEORIES

I am grateful to Jonathan Z. Smith, Paul Griffiths, Brannon Wheeler, Joseph Wawrykow, Benjamin Ray, Bruce Chilton, and Charles Hallisey for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter, which was originally presented at the panel, "Commentarial Acts," at the American Academy of Religion, November 1994.

1. See, for instance, Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion"; M. Wax and R. Wax, "Notion of Magic"; Hammond, "Magic: A Problem in Semantics"; Kippenberg and Luchesi, *Magie;* J. Z. Smith, "Good News Is No News"; Neusner, Frerichs, Flesher, *Religion, Science and Magic*.

2. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads,* 310.

3. See B. K. Smith's discussion of this and other more recent works in his *Reflections on Resemblance,* 37–38.

4. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman;* Bhat, *Vedic Tantrism*.

5. Barth, *Religions of India,* 96–97.

6. I am grateful to personal conversation with Brian K. Smith for this perspective on the Vidhāna material, as well as discussions at the conference, "Relevance of the Veda," University of Florida, February 1996. See also my *Authority, Anxiety, and Canon,* for later cases of the same kinds of appropriation.

7. See Siegel, *Net of Magic,* 149–50; as well as Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* 3.45.

8. Glucklich, *End of Magic,* 109–10.

9. Ibid., 96.

10. Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*. Although I do not share the predictive interests of cognitive theories of religion, nor do I share their scientific optimism in the capacity of a single approach to describe religious phenomena, they have done the field an invaluable service in pointing out the basic possibilities of linguistic phenomena to help us understand ritual and myth in nonreductive ways. Their mathematical approach is frequently misunderstood; they in

fact argue for the flexibility of cognitive schema in religious traditions (Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion,* 156–58); they also argue that the semantic space that a concept occupies is a *mosaic* that emerges from the wide range of functions it serves in various models (ibid., 153). Certainly Lawson and McCauley's work does the first, basic systematic exposition of how Lakoff and Johnson (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*), as well as other authors, can be used carefully and systematically in the analysis of religion.

11. See discussion in Glucklich, *End of Magic,* 110–11; Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion,* 149–51; and Lakoff and Johnson, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things,* 269–70.

12. Glucklich, *End of Magic,* 112–16.

13. See Witzel, "On Magical Thought," at http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/Magical_Thought.pdf. p. 11.

14. Ibid., 9. See K. Hoffman, "Aufsatze zur Indo-Iranistik."

15. Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 528–29.

16. The text of the *Ṛg Vidhāna* itself is explicitly hostile toward those elements that could be roughly translated as "magic," such as *māyā,* whose more Vedic meaning is "magical artifice." For instance, *Ṛg Vidhāna* 4.115 states that *Ṛg Veda* 10.177 is destructive of illusions (*māyābhedana).*

17. J. Z. Smith, "Sacred Persistence," 47–52. For a fuller discussion of the value of the category of commentary (and relatedly, associational thought) in the later Vedic period see my work, *Myth as Argument,* chs. 2 and 16.

18. Here, I do not mean to denigrate or make "anemic" the clear belief in the power of ritual speech that heavily informs both the early and the late Vedic worldviews. Rather, I mean to show the ways in which the lens of associational thought brings into focus certain intellectual operations, performed on behalf of the intellectual elite, that the category of magic does not focus on so immediately. Among many other of his works, Tambiah, in "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts," refers to some of these intellectual operations (metonymy, and so on). However, by viewing certain practices as instances of "magical thought," he does not provide the kind of close, line-by-line analysis that might be warranted by viewing the same set of texts as instances of "associational thought." I am grateful to Benjamin Ray for a discussion that clarified this issue.

19. Gibbs, "Speaking and Thinking with Metonymy," 62.

20. Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language."

21. Since Jakobson wrote these articles, much has been added to or criticized about his twofold schema: it is said that it is too simplistic, and that it is difficult to make hard and fast distinctions between the two categories in many instances (see Heinz, '*Paradigmatisch*'–'*symtagmatisch*'; and Heinz, "Polysemie und semantische Relationen im Lexikon"; also discussed in Blank, "Co-Presence"). Effective metaphors can also be based in part of contiguity, and effective metonyms can be in part based on paradigmatic similarity. Sylvia Plath's line, "How long can my hands be a bandage to this hurt?" is a perfect example of how the two can be linked: hurt hand could be in fact contiguous to the bandage (metonymy) and at the same time they could also be paradigmatically compared to the bandage, which is another conceptual realm than the hurt hand as body part (metaphor).

22. Blank, "Co-Presence," 173.
23. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception;* see also Bergson, "Images and Bodies."
24. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 16–17.
25. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance,* 158.
26. Panther and Radden, "Introduction," 12
27. Warren, "Aspects of Referential Metonymy," 124.
28. See discussion in Croft, "Role of Domains," 335–70, esp. 347ff.
29. Rosch, "Principles of Categorization," 28–49.
30. Dimock, "Class, Gender, and the History of Metonymy," 87–91.
31. Nerlich, Clarke, and Todd, "Mommy, I like Being a Sandwich," 363.
32. Ibid., 370.
33. Pankhurst, "Recontextualization of Metonymy," 386.
34. Norrik, *Semiotic Principles in Semantic Theory;* also see Pankhurst, "Recontextualization," 387.
35. Rifaterre, *Fictional Truth,* 21.
36. Langaker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar,* 388.
37. Tedlock, *Spoken Word;* see also Tedlock and Mannheim, *Dialogic Emergence of Culture.*
38. Tedlock, *Spoken Word,* 17.
39. Briggs, *Competence in Performance,* 372.
40. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone;* Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies;* Grimes, *Ritual Criticism;* Spiziri, *Cobbler's Universe;* Nájera-Ramírez, *Fiesta de los Tastoanes;* Mudimbe, *Tales of Faith;* Driver, *Life in Performance;* Laderman, *Taming the Wind of Desire;* Gill, *Native American Religious Action.*
41. Briggs, *Competence,* 359.
42. Ibid., 327.
43. Ibid., 337.
44. Gardner and Staal, *Altar of Fire.*
45. Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 635.
46. Gibbs, "Speaking and Thinking with Metonymy," 66.
47. *Manusmṛti* 2.5.
48. Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 630.

CHAPTER 3. *VINIYOGA*

1. Following Wheelock, "Problem of Ritual Language," 54. See, among many other interpretive works on speech acts, the "Ur-texts" of Austin's *How to Do Things with Words;* and Searle, "Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts," 1–29.
2. This debate engages not only the question of mantra, but the entire question of the possibility of meaning. For an approach that posits a certain continuity of mantra usage in the midst of cultural change, see Renou, "Pouvoirs de la Parole dans le *Ṛg Veda*"; Gonda, *Vision of the Vedic Poets;* Gonda, "Indian *Mantra.*" For a more mystical, *bhakti*-oriented view of mantra, see W. Johnson, *Poetry and Speculation.* For a strictly syntactical analysis of mantra usage, see Staal, "Concept of Metalanguage and its Indian Background"; Staal, "*Ṛg Veda* 10:71 on the Origin of Language"; Staal, "Ritual Syntax"; Staal, "Meaninglessness of Ritual";

Staal, "Ritual, Mantras, and the Origin of Language"; Staal, "Search for Meaning"; Staal, "Sound of Religion"; Staal, "Vedic *Mantra*s"; and Staal, *Rules Without Meaning*. For a more performative perspective, see Wheelock, "Ritual Language of a Vedic Sacrifice"; Wheelock, "Taxonomy of *Mantra*s"; Wheelock, "Problem of Ritual Language"; Wheelock, "*Mantra* in Vedic and Tantric Ritual"; Findly, "*Mantra kaviśasta*"; Patton, "Vāc: Myth or Philosophy?"; Goehler, "Gab es im alten Indien eine Sprechakttheorie?"; and Deshpande, "Changing Conceptions of the Veda." See also my "Speech Acts and King's Edicts."

3. This notion is elaborated in Frits Staal's now-classic article, "Ritual Syntax." In the Brāhmaṇas, these resemblances (called *bandhu*s) were worked out philosophically between different kinds of categories of things — sacrificial materials, the different elements, the different *varṇa*s, or social classes. The literature on *bandhu*s is quite extensive; here I might simply point to the more well-known works: Schayer, "Die Struktur der magischen Weltanschauung nach dem Atharva-Veda und den Brāhmaṇa-Texten"; Renou, "'Connexion' en Védique, 'cause' en bouddhique"; Gonda, "Bandhus in the Brāhmaṇas"; Boris Oguibenine, *"Bandhu* et *dakṣinā"*; and Witzel, *Magical Thought in the* Veda.

4. Glucklich, *End of Magic,* 208–11.

5. Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion,* 102–10, 166–69.

6. Ibid., 169.

7. Lawson and McCauley, *Bringing Ritual to Mind.* The similarities in the titles of our books is entirely serendipitous, although it may lead colleagues to wonder if a new school in the study of religion is being developed at Emory.

8. Ibid., 13–14.

9. Ibid., 17.

10. Ibid., 18.

11. Houben, *Pravargya Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka,* 7, n10.

12. See also Weber, *Indische Studien,* 110

13. Fay, *Rig-Veda Mantras,* 22.

14. Similar passages are cited in *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.2.1; *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 1.3.9; and *Manava Śrauta Sūtra* 1.1.1.5; and Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 511.

15. This is usually the case for the schools of the *Ṛg Veda* when they refer to Ṛg Vedic verses. But this strict pattern was usually not completely followed. At times, mantras were taken from other schools and concatenated from several different schools at once (Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 505–7).

16. Ibid., 567–69.

17. Apte, *New Indian Antiquary,* 145–48; Apte, *Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhya Sūtras*; Pillai, *Non-ṛgvedic Mantras in the Marriage Ceremonies,* 1; Dandekar, *ABORI,* 271; Kashikar, *BDCRI,* 67.

18. Also *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 4.21.2; *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.9.8. Similar cases are found in *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.4.12; *Vārāha Gṛhya Sūtra* 13.4; see discussion in Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 568.

19. See my discussion of this passage in *Myth as Argument,* ch. 14.

20. G. Jha, *Prabhākāra School of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā,* 187.

21. Ibid., 188.

22. Ibid. (See, in particular, *ŚB* 1.5.3.9.)

23. Clooney, "What's a God?"
24. Ibid., 351–52.
25. Ibid., 356.
26. Ibid., 379.
27. To take another example cited above, *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.18 says that the same mantra is used when shaving a beard as is used when shaving a child's head in the initiation into study *(upanayana)*—except that the word "beard" is substituted for "hair." This is clearly a case of conscious substitution.
28. See also discussion in Gonda, *Ritual Sūtras,* 569.
29. Ibid.
30. Fay, *Rig-Veda Mantras,* 23.
31. Oldenberg, *Die Hymnen des Rig-Veda,* I:271ff, 328; and Oldenberg, *Gṛhya Sūtras,* especially 30, xiff.
32. In a nonoral context, Narāyaṇa Rao uses the very helpful category of "read text" in this situation (personal conversation, November 2001).
33. Hillebrandt, *Bezenberger's Beitraege,* 195 and Oberlies, *Die Religion des Ṛg Veda* (1998).
34. Fay, *Rig-Veda Mantras,* 25.
35. *Prayer Book of the Āpastambins*; and Knauer, *Gobhilagṛhyasūtra*; and his *Mānavagṛhyasūtras.* Caland also discussed these issues in a review of Winternitz's work in *GGS* 1898, 950; and in his *Altindisches zauberritual.* Much of the focus was on the connections between the Śrauta and the Gṛhya mantra usages.
36. See my *Myth as Argument,* ch. 7.
37. Lele, *Some Atharvanic Portions,* 8.
38. Gonda, "Bandhu in the Brāhmaṇas," 35.
39. Ibid., 16. Wheelock, "Problem of Ritual Language"; Findly, "Mantra kaviśasta"; and Deshpande, "Changing Conceptions of the Veda" have used similar examples to talk about these mantras as speech acts–speech that accomplishes and does not just express.
40. Ibid., 26.
41. See also Renou, "Sur La Notion de *bráhman,*" 32.
42. Fay, *Rig-Veda Mantras,* 22.
43. Malamoud, *Cooking the World,* 226–46.
44. Ibid., 232.
45. Ibid., 244.
46. Renou, *Etudes Vediques et Panineenes,* 76ff. Discussed by Malamoud, *Cooking the World,* 245.
47. Malamoud, *Cooking the World,* 245.
48. However, the Vidhāna text departs from these numerical *viniyoga*s, distinct as it is from the Śrauta world that is represented by them.
49. York, *Poem as Utterance,* 26.

CHAPTER 4. FIRE, LIGHT, AND INGESTING OVER TIME

1. Malamoud, *Cooking the World,* 36. The meaning is not a settled matter.
2. Ibid., 7.
3. Ibid., 27.

4. Ibid., 38–42.
5. Ibid., 40, 65.
6. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 3.1.3.29; see also *Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra* for the household fire as womb, and the householder as being identified with it, and also a womb.
7. Heesterman, *Inner Conflict,* 91.
8. See discussion in Heesterman, *Inner Conflict,* 223 n29.
9. *Ṛg Veda* 1.2

1.2.1. vā́yav ā́ yāhi darśata imé sómā áraṃkṛtāḥ/
téṣām pāhi śrudhī́ hávam//

1.2.2. vā́ya ukthébhir jarante tuvā́m áchā jaritā́raḥ/
sutásomā aharvídaḥ//

1.2.3. vā́yo táva prapṛñcatī́ dhénā jigāti dāśúṣe/
urūcī́ sómapītaye//

Dhenā is given in *Nighaṇṭu* 1.11 as Vāc. Geldner also has, as an alternative to Stimme, "Lippe."

1.2.4. índravāyū imé sutā́ úpa práyobhir ā́ gatam/
índavo vām uśánti hí//

1.2.5. vā́yav índraś ca cetathaḥ sutā́nāṃ vājinīvasū/
tā́v ā́ yātam úpa dravát//

1.2.6. vā́yav índraś ca sunvatá ā́ yātam úpa niṣkṛtám/
makṣú itthā́ dhiyā́ narā//

Note here the dual *narā;* the term can be applied to gods. Sāyaṇa explains it as *netṛ* or "leader, guide."

1.2.7. mitráṃ huve pūtádakṣaṃ váruṇaṃ ca riśā́dasam/

Geldner gives *herrenstolzen.*

dhíyaṃ ghṛtā́cīṃ sā́dhantā//

Grassman has *riśādas* from *risā* and *adas,* as does *Nirukta* 6.14, with *adas* from root *ad,* to consume or eat (Grassman, *Worterbuch zum Rig Veda,* 1167). Thus, "consuming in force" might be an appropriate epithet, signifying might or power. It is usually an epithet of Varuṇa, or the Maruts, and occasionally Aryamān or Agni.

1.2.8. ṛténa mitrāvaruṇāv ṛtāvṛdhāv ṛtaspṛśā/
krátum bṛhántam āśathe//

Sāyaṇa frequently glosses *ṛta* as "water," and in this case, although truth is the main meaning, there is an implication here that Mitra and Varuṇa are performing the act of causing rain by producing evaporation.

1.2.9. kavī́ no mitrā́váruṇā tuvijātā́ urukṣáyā/
dákṣaṃ dadhāte apásam//

10. Hymn 1.2, *Ṛg Veda* 1.3:

1.3.1. áśvinā yájvarīr íṣo drávatpāṇī śúbhas patī/
púrubhujā canasyátam//

Purubhujā also has the connotation of great eater.

1.3.2. áśvinā púrudaṃsasā nárā śávīrayā dhiyā́/
dhíṣṇiyā vánataṃ gíraḥ//

1.3.3. dásrā yuvā́kavaḥ sutā́ nā́satyā vṛktábarhiṣaḥ/
ā́ yātaṃ rudravartanī//

Sāyaṇa renders this "way of Rudra" as "van of the heroes"; *vartani* being a van and Rudra being from the traditional etymology of "those who make their enemies weep" *(rodayanti)*.

1.3.4. índrā́ yāhi citrabhāno sutā́ imé tuvāyávaḥ/
áṇvībhis tánā pūtā́saḥ//

1.3.5. índrā́ yāhi dhiyéṣitó víprajūtaḥ sutā́vataḥ/
úpa bráhmāṇi vāghátaḥ//

1.3.6. índrā́ yāhi tū́tujāna úpa bráhmāṇi harivaḥ/
suté dadhiṣva naś cánaḥ//

1.3.7. ómāsaś carṣaṇīdhṛto víśve devāsa ā́ gata/
dāśvā́ṃso dāśúṣaḥ sutám//

1.3.8. víśve devā́so aptúraḥ sutám ā́ ganta tū́rṇayaḥ/
usrā́ iva svásarāṇi//

1.3.9. víśve devā́so asrídha éhimāyāso adrúhaḥ/
médhaṃ juṣanta váhnayaḥ//

Sāyaṇa explains *ehimāyāsaḥ* as "those who have obtained universal knowledge" *(sarvato vyaptaprajṇaḥ)*. It could also be the exclamation of the All-Gods to Agni when he escaped into the waters: *ehi, mā yāsiḥ*—"don't go away!" Geldner renders *ungern fortgelassen*.

1.3.10. pavākā́ naḥ sárasvatī vā́jebhir vājínīvatī/
yajñáṃ vaṣṭu dhiyā́vasuḥ//

1.3.11. codayitrī́ sūnṛ́tānāṃ cétantī sumatīnā́m/
yajñáṃ dadhe sárasvatī//

1.3.12. mahó árṇaḥ sárasvatī prá cetayati ketúnā/
dhíyo víśvā ví rājati//

In its nonritual meanings, the *praüga* is the name for the forepart of a shaft of a chariot, and in slightly later texts, it means the shape of a triangle.

11. As Caland remarks, *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* gives them in a slightly longer fashion *(sakalapāṭhena)* than its matching Brāhmaṇa passage, which gives only the *pratīka* of the first. These *pruroruc* verses are given to us in the *khila*s right before the "chapter of praises" *(praiṣādhyāya)* (see Scheftelowitz, *Die Apokryphen des* Ṛgveda, 141). *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra,* trans. Caland. At present, they read in a formulaic way, following number one as a model: *āhaya vāyuragrenā ityādikām vāyavyāṃ purorucaṃ sasṛcchstvā tato vāyavā yāhi darśatetyetāsāṃ tisṛṇāṃ triḥ prathamāṃ śaṃset//*

12. See Malamoud, *Cooking the World,* 241. Malamoud sets out this scheme as a way of writing about the rather piecemeal relationship between text and ritual, but my argument here is that there is more to the "impoverished" associations of ritual and word in this Brāhmaṇa scheme. Even if the mantras used are based only on the fact that they have the same name of the divinity, or have the

same metrical patterns as the day, and so on, there is still the possibility of rich imaginative worlds to be built.

13. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.165–66

ādyāni trīṇi sūktāni pañca cāgre bṛhānn iti
ṣaṭ tathāntyāni sūktāni agniṃ nara itoti ca
prakṛtānīti cādhyāyam bhojanāt prāk paṭhed idam
sarvān kāmān avāpnoti mucyate sarvakilbiṣaiḥ

14. *Ṛg Veda* 1.22.17–21

1.22.17. idáṃ víṣṇur ví cakrame trayidhā́ ní dadhe padám/
sámūḻham asya pāṃsuré//

Sāyaṇa sees the three steps as a kind of entering, or pervading, the world *(viśateḥ)*.

1.22.18. trī́ṇi padā́ ví carkame víṣṇur gopā́ ádābhiyaḥ/
áto dhármāṇi dhāráyan//

Sāyaṇa sees the later Viṣṇu in the earlier one, rendering him as *gopa sarvasya jagato rakṣakaḥ*.

1.22.19. víṣṇoḥ kármāṇi paśyata yáto vratā́ni paspaśé/
índrasya yújiya sákhā//

1.22.20. tád víṣṇoḥ paramám padáṃ sádā paśyanti sūráyaḥ/
divī̀va cákṣur ā́tatam//

Sāyaṇa reads *padaṃ* as *svargam,* but I thought it best to render it simply as "place."

1.22.21. tád víprāso vipanyávo jāgṛvā́ṃsaḥ sám indhate/
víṣṇor yát paramám padám//

15. See Sakapuni, Sāyaṇa on *Ṛg Veda* 1.22.17–21.

16. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.87–88

idaṃ viṣṇur itīmābhiḥ pañcabhiḥ śrāddhakarmaṇi/
aṅguṣṭham anne vag āhya tena rakṣāṃsi bādhate//
saptajanmakṛtaṃ pāpaṃ kṛtvā cābhakṣyabhakṣaṇam/
tad viṣṇor ity apām madhye sakṛj japtvā viśudhyati///

The general rule also in the *Sāma Vidhāna* 5.13, and in *Manu* 11.160, is that if one eats forbidden food, one should do a *prayaścitta,* or expiation.

17. *Ṛg Veda* 1.187

1.187.1. pitúṃ nú stoṣam mahó dharmā́ṇaṃ táviṣīm/
yásya tritó ví ójasā vṛtráṃ víparvam ardáyat//

Trita here is the name of Indra, as Sāyaṇa has it: the one who lords over the three worlds.

1.187.2. svā́do pito mádho pito vayáṃ tuvā vavṛmahe/
asmā́kam avitā́ bhava//

1.187.3. úpa naḥ pitav ā́ cara śiváḥ śivā́bhir ūtíbhiḥ/
mayobhúr adviṣeṇiyáḥ sákhā suśévo ádvayāḥ//

Advayāḥ here as "not twofold." Sāyaṇa suggests also *sakha,* a friend, who does not differ.

1.187.4. táva tiyé pito rásā rájāṃsi ánu víṣṭhitāḥ/
diví vā́tā iva śritā́ḥ//

1.187.5. táva tyé pito dádatas táva svādiṣṭha té pito/
prá svādmā́no rásānāṃ tuvigrī́vā iverate//

Tuvigrīvā here might mean "many throated," but could also be as Sāyaṇa explains it "*pravṛddha,*" enlarged throats due to much eating. Gelder renders *starknackigen Stieren.*

1.187.6. tuvé pito mahā́nāṃ devā́nām máno hitám/
ákāri cā́ru ketúnā távā́him ávasāvadhīt//

1.187.7. yád adó pito ájagan vivásva párvatānām/
átrā cin no madho pito áram bhakṣā́ya gamiyāḥ//

1.187.8. yád apām óṣadhīnām pariṃśám āriśā́mahe/
vā́tāpe pī́va íd bhava//

Sāyaṇa renders *vātāpi* as *śarīra,* body. Geldner takes the plainer meaning. Throughout the next verses, *pitu* (food) is identified with Soma.

1.187.9. yát te soma gávāśiro yávāśiro bhájāmahe/
vā́tāpe pī́va íd bhava//

1.187.10. karambhá oṣadhe bhava pī́vo vṛkká udārathíḥ/
vā́tāpe pī́va íd bhava//

For *vṛkka udārathiḥ,* Geldner has "kidney fat." I prefer to follow Sāyaṇa's meaning for *udārathiḥ* and translate it as "enlivening the senses."

1.187.11. táṃ tvā vayám pito vácobhir gā́vo ná havyā́ suṣūdima/
devébhyas tvā sadhamā́dam asmábhyaṃ tvā sadhamā́dam//

18. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.145–48ab

pituṃ nv ity upatiṣṭhate nityaṃ annam upasthitam
pūjayed aśanaṃ nityaṃ bhuñjīyād avikutsitam
nāsya syād annajo vyādhir viṣam apy annatām īyāt
viṣaṃ ca pītvaitat sūktaṃ japet viṣanāśanam
nāvāgyatas tu bhuñjīta nāśucir na jugupsitam
dadyāc ca pūjayec caiva juhuyāc ca śuciḥ sadā
kṣud bhayaṃ nāsya kiñcit syān nānnajaṃ vyādhim āpnuyāt

19. *Ṛg Veda* 7.1

7.1.1. agníṃ náro dī́dhitibhir aráṇyor hástacyutī janayanta praśastám/
dūredṛ́śaṃ gṛhápatim atharyúm//

7.1.2. tám agním áste vásavo ní ṛṇvan supraticákṣam ávase kútaś cit/
dakṣā́yiyo yó dáma ā́sa nítyaḥ//

7.1.3. práiddho agne dīdihi puró no ájasrayā suūrmíyā yaviṣṭha/
tuvā́ṃ śáśvanta úpa yanti vā́jāḥ//

Ajasrayā suūrmiyā may mean an iron stake or post, or perhaps kindled wood. Cf. *Yajur Veda* 7.76; *Sāma Veda* 2.725.

7.4. prá te agnáyo agníbhyo váraṃ níḥ suvī́rāsaḥ śośucanta dyumántaḥ/
yátrā nā́raḥ samā́sate sujātā́ḥ//

7.5. dā́ no agne dhiyā́ rayíṃ suvī́raṃ suapatyáṃ sahasiya praśastám/
ná yám yā́vā tárati yātumā́vān//

7.6. úpa yám éti yuvatíḥ sudákṣaṃ doṣā́ vástor havíṣmatī ghṛtā́cī/
úpa svaínam arámatir vasūyúḥ//

7.7. víśvā agne ápa daha árātīr yébhis tápobhir ádaho járūtham/
prá nisvaráṃ cātayasva ámīvām//

Sāyaṇa sees Jarūtha as the "harsh-voiced" or threatening one.

7.8. ā́ yás te agna idhaté ánīkaṃ vásiṣṭha śúkra dī́divaḥ pávāka/
utó na ebhí stavā́thair ihá syāḥ//

7.9. ví yé te agne bhejiré ánīkam mártā nā́raḥ pítriyāsaḥ purutrā́/
utó na ebhíḥ sumánā ihá syāḥ//

7.10. imé nā́ro vṛtrahátyeṣu śū́rā víśvā ádevīr abhí santu māyā́ḥ/
yé me dhíyam panáyanta praśastā́m//

7.11. mā́ śū́ne agne ní ṣadāma nṛṇā́m mā́śéṣaso avī́ratā pári tvā/
prajā́vatīṣu dúriyāsu durya//

7.12. yám aśvī́ nítyam upayā́ti yajñám prajā́vantaṃ suapatyáṃ kṣáyaṃ naḥ/
svájanmanā śéṣasā vāvṛdhānám//

7.13. pāhí no agne rakṣáso ájuṣṭāt pāhí dhūrtér áraruṣo aghāyóḥ/
tuvā́ yujā́ pṛtanāyū́m̐r abhí ṣyām//

7.14. séd agnír agnī́m̐r áti astu anyā́n yátra vājī́ tánayo vīḷúpāṇiḥ/
sahásrapāthā akṣárā saméti//

7.15. séd agnír yó vanuṣyató nipā́ti sameddhā́ram; áṃhasa uruṣyā́t/
sujātā́saḥ pári caranti vīrā́ḥ//

7.16. ayáṃ só agnír ā́hutaḥ purutrā́ yám ī́śānaḥ sám íd indhé havíṣmān/
pári yám éti adhvaréṣu hótā//

7.17. tuvé agna āhávanāni bhū́ri īśānā́sa ā́ juhuyāma nítyā/
ubhā́ kṛṇv ánto vahatū́ miyédhe//

7.18. imó agne vītátamāni havyā́ ájasro vakṣi devátātim ácha/
práti na īṃ surabhī́ṇi viyantu//

7.19. mā́ no agne avī́rate párā dā durvā́sasé 'mataye mā́ no asyaí/
mā́ naḥ kṣudhé mā́ rakṣása ṛtāvo mā́ no dáme mā́ vána ā́ juhūrthāḥ//

7.20. nū́ me bráhmāṇi agna úc chaśādhi tuváṃ deva maghávadbhyaḥ suṣūdaḥ/
rātaú siyāma ubháyāsa ā́ te yūyám pāta suastíbhiḥ sádā naḥ//

Here, the plural *yūyam* may be *"you and your attendants."*

7.21. tuvám agne suhávo raṇvásaṃdṛk sudītī́ sūno sahaso didīhi/
mā́ tvé sácā tánaye nítya ā́ dhaṅ mā́ vīró asmán náriyo ví dāsīt//

7.22. mā́ no agne durbhṛtáye sácaiṣú deváiddheṣu agníṣu prá vocaḥ/
mā́ te asmā́n durmatáyo bhṛmā́c cid devásya sūno sahaso naśanta//

7.23. sá márto agne suanīka revā́n ámartiye yá ājuhóti havyám/
sá devátā vasuvániṃ dadhāti yáṃ sūrír arthī́ pṛchámāna éti//

One assumes here that the questioning has to do with the identity and liberality of Agni, although it could also have to do with whether the sacrificer is the appropriate one to sponsor.

7.24. mahó no agne suvitásya vidvā́n rayíṃ sūríbhya ā́ vahā bṛhántam/
yéna vayáṃ sahasāvan mádema ávikṣitāsa ā́yuṣā suvī́rāḥ//

7.25. nū́ me bráhmāṇi agna úc chaśādhi tuváṃ deva maghávadbhyaḥ suṣūdaḥ/
rātaú siyāma ubháyāsa ā́ te yūyám pāta suastíbhiḥ sádā naḥ//

20. As Geldner notes of verse 22, Agni should not accuse the singer with the gods that he is being treated badly. The fires lit by the gods are heavenly ones. They appear here, as the son does, as the judges of men (Geldner, *Der Ṛg Veda,* 2:180–81).

21. *Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 8.1.28.

22. I am grateful to H. G. Ranade and Selukar, who during the Soma sacrifice in Nanded, Maharashtra, 1992, discussed this contemporary interpretation with me.

23. prāgbhojanam idaṃ brahma mānavānāṃ maharṣiṇām
pūrvāhṇe japato nityam arthasiddhiḥ parā bhavet

24. *Ṛg Veda* 10.1

10.1.1. ágre bṛhánn uṣásām ūrdhvo asthān nirjaganvā́n támaso jyótiṣā́gāt/
agnír bhāhúnā rúśatā suáṅga ā́ jātó víśvā sádmāni aprāḥ//

Sāyaṇa explains this ritually, as the fire brought from the *gārhapatya* to the *āhavanīya* (see *ŚB* 6.7.3.10; *YV* 12.13).

10.1.2. sá jātó gárbho asi ródasīyor ágne cā́rur víbhṛta óṣadhīṣu/
citráḥ śíśuḥ pári támāṃsi aktū́n prá mātṛ́bhyo ádhi kánikradat gāḥ//

Sāyaṇa thinks of this as the wood for the fire. If one follows *Yajur Veda* 11.43, it might well be the cakes for the offering.

10.1.3. víṣṇur itthā́ paramám asya vidvā́ñ jātó bṛhánn abhí pāti tṛtī́yam/
āsā́ yád asya páyo ákrata sváṃ sácetaso abhí arcanti átra//

Tritīyam asya is the "third manifestation of Agni" according to Sāyaṇa.

10.1.4. áta u tvā pitubhṛ́to jánitrīr annāvṛ́dham práti caranti ánnaiḥ/
tā́ īm práty eṣi púnar anyárūpā ási tvám vikṣú mā́nuṣīṣu hótā//

10.1.5. hótāraṃ citrárathaṃ adhvarásya yajñasya-yaj ñasya ketúṃ rúśantam/
prátyardhiṃ devásya-devasya mahnā́ śriyā́ tú agním átithiṃ jánānām//

10.1.6. sá tú vástrāṇi ádha péśanāni vásāno agnír nā́bhā pṛthivyā́ḥ/
aruṣó jātáḥ padá iḻāyāḥ puróhito rājan yakṣīhá devā́n//

Nābhā here in its noted Vedic meaning of an altar; *ila* as the *uttaravedi,* as in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 1.28.

10.1.7. ā́ hí dyā́vāpṛthivī́ agna ubhé sádā putró ná mātárā tatántha/
prá yāhi ácha uśató yaviṣṭha átha ā́ vaha sahasyehá devā́n//

Ṛg Veda 10.2

10.2.1. piprīhí devā́ṃ uśató yaviṣṭha vidvā́m̐ ṛtū́m̐r ṛtupate yajehá/
yé daíviyā ṛtvíjas tébhir agne tuváṃ hótṝṇām asi ā́yajiṣṭhaḥ

For Sāyana, following Āśvalāyana, the priests in heaven are Chandramas as the *brahman,* Āditya as the *adhvaryu,* and Parjanya the *udgātṛ*.

10.2.2. véṣi hotrám utá potráṃ jánānām mandhātā́si draviṇodā́ ṛtā́vā/
svā́hā vayáṃ kṛṇávāmā havī́ṃṣi devó devā́n yajatu agnír árhan//

10.2.3. ā́ devā́nām ápi pánthām aganma yác chaknávāma tád ánu právoḻhum/
agnír vidvā́n sá yajāt séd u hótā só adhvarā́n sá ṛtū́n kalpayāti//

10.2.4. yád vo vayám praminā́ma vratā́ni vidúṣāṃ devā áviduṣṭarāsaḥ/
agníṣ ṭád víśvam ā́ pṛṇā́ti vidvā́n yébhir devā́ṃ ṛtúbhi kalpayāti//

10.2.5. yát pākatrā́ mánasā dīnádakṣā ná yajñásya manvaté mártiyāsaḥ/
agníṣ ṭád dhótā kratuvíd vijānán yájiṣṭho devā́m̐ ṛtuśó yajāti//

10.2.6. víśveṣāṃ hí adhvarā́ṇām ánīkaṃ citráṃ ketuṃ jánitā tvā jajā́na/
sá ā́ yajasva nṛvátīr ánu kṣā́ spārhā́ íṣaḥ kṣumátīr viśvájanyāḥ//

Janitā here could be the *yajamāna,* or Prajāpati. Geldner has *Erzeuger.*

10.2.7. yáṃ tvā dyā́vāpṛthivī́ yáṃ tuvā́pas tváṣṭā yáṃ tvā sujánimā jajā́na/
pánthām ánu pravidvā́n pitṛyā́ṇaṃ dyumád agne samidhānó ví bhāhi//

Ṛg Veda 10.3

10.3.1. inó rājann aratíḥ sámiddho raúdro dákṣāya suṣumā́m̐ adarśi/
cikíd ví bhāti bhāsā́ bṛhatā́ ásiknīm eti rúśatīm apā́jan//

Also see *Sāma Vidhāna* 2.7.25 for the first three verses of this hymn. Sāyaṇa comments that these refer to the sacrifices at sunset and the morning; they drive away the light and go to the darkness.

10.3.2. kṛṣṇā́ṃ yád énīm abhí várpasā bhū́j janáyan yóṣām bṛhatáḥ pitur jā́m/
ūrdhvám bhānúṃ sū́riyasya stabhāyán divó vásubhir aratír ví bhāti//

Here, the daughter is dawn, the daughter of the sun.

10.3.3. bhadró bhadráyā sácamāna ā́gāt svásāraṃ jāró abhí eti paścā́t/
supraketaír dyúbhir agnír vitíṣṭhan rúśadbhir várṇair abhí rāmám asthāt//

10.3.4. asyá yā́māso bṛható ná vagnū́n índhānā agnéḥ śakhiyuḥ śivásya/
ī́ḍyasya vṛ́ṣṇo bṛhatáḥ suā́so bhā́māso yā́man aktávaś cikitre//

10.3.5. svanā́ ná yásya bhā́māsaḥ pávante rócamānasya bṛhatáḥ sudívaḥ/
jyéṣṭhebhir yás téjiṣṭhaiḥ krīḻumádbhir várṣiṣṭhebhir bhānúbhir nákṣati dyā́m//

10.3.6. asyá śúṣmāso dadṛśānápaver jéhamānasya svanayan niyúdbhiḥ/
pratnébhir yó rúśadbhir devátamo ví rébhadbhir aratír bhā́ti víbhvā//

10.3.7. sá ā́ vakṣi máhi na ā́ ca satsi divásprthivyór aratír yuvatyóḥ/
agníḥ sutúkaḥ sutúkebhir áśvai rábhasvadbhī rábhasvām̐ éhá gamyāḥ//

Yuvatyoḥ may mean *parasparam miṣṛtayoḥ,* mixed up together, or *taruṇyoḥ*, young women. Geldner simply translates "jugendliche Erde und Himmel."

Ṛg Veda 10.4

10.4.1. prá te yakṣi prá ta iyarmi mánma bhúvo yáthā vándiyo no háveṣu/
dhánvann iva prapā́ asi tvám agna iyakṣáve pūráve pratna rā́jan//

10.4.2. yáṃ tvā jánāso abhí saṃcáranti gā́va uṣṇám iva vrajáṃ yaviṣṭha/
dūtó devā́nām asi mártiyānām antár mahā́ṃś carasi rocanéna//

10.4.3. śíśuṃ ná tvā jéniyaṃ vardháyantī mātā́ bibharti sacanasyámānā/
dhánor ádhi pravátā yāsi háryañ jígīṣase paśúr ivā́vasṛṣṭaḥ//

10.4.4. mūrā́ amūra ná vayáṃ cikitvo mahitvám agne tuvám aṅga vitse/
śáye vavríś cárati jihváyādán rerihyáte yuvatíṃ viśpátiḥ sán//

Sāyaṇa compares this youth with the withered plants—*jirṇaushadikām*.

10.4.5. kū́cij jāyate sánayāsu návyo váne tasthau palitó dhūmáketuḥ/
asnātā́po vṛṣabhó ná prá veti sácetaso yám praṇáyanta mártāḥ//

10.4.6. tanūtyájeva táskarā vanargū́ raśanābhir daśábhir abhy àdhītām/
iyáṃ te agne návyasī manīṣā́ yukṣvā́ ráthaṃ ná śucáyadbhir áṅgaiḥ//

This phrase means body abandoning, Sāyaṇa supplies *martum kṛtaniṣcayau*, ready to die. *Yāska* 3.14 sees this as a comparison to the two arms churning the fire.

10.4.7. bráhma ca te jātavedo námaś ca iyáṃ ca gī́ḥ sádam íd várdhanī bhūt/
rákṣā ṇo agne tánayāni tokā́ rákṣotá nas tanúvo áprayuchan//

Ṛg Veda 10.5

10.5.1. ékaḥ samudró dharúṇo rayīṇā́m asmád dhṛdó bhū́rijanmā ví caṣṭe/
síṣakti ū́dhar niṇiyór upástha útsasya mádhye níhitam padáṃ véḥ//

Utsasya could be either the world of the waters or *megha*, a cloud.

10.5.2. samānáṃ nīḻáṃ vṛ́ṣaṇo vásānāḥ sáṃ jagmire mahiṣā́ árvatībhiḥ/
ṛtásya padáṃ kaváyo ní pānti gúhā nā́māni dadhire párāṇi//

Sāyaṇa explains *guhā* . . . and so on here as holding the names of Agni within themselves.

10.5.3. ṛtāyínī māyínī sáṃ dadhāte mitvā́ śíśuṃ jajñatur vardháyantī/
víśvasya nā́bhiṃ cárato dhruvásya kavéś cit tántum mánasā viyántaḥ//

Tantum, the thread, here might be the Agni that is called Vaiśvarana.

10.5.4. ṛtásya hí vartanáyaḥ sújātam íṣo vā́jāya pradívaḥ sácante/
adhīvāsáṃ ródasī vāvasāné ghṛtaír ánnair vāvṛdhāte mádhūnām//

Sāyaṇa here gives *iṣa* as desiring, as if it were the epithet of *vartanaya;* but it is food. Geldner has *Speisegenusse.*

10.5.5. saptá svásṝr áruṣīr vāvaśānó vidvā́n mádhva új jabhārā dṛśé kám/
antár yeme antárikṣe purājā́ ichán vavrím avidat pūṣaṇásya//

Sāyaṇa says this line refers to Agni as the sun who draws up his seven rays from heaven.

10.5.6. saptá maryā́dāḥ kaváyas tatakṣus tā́sām ékām íd abhí aṃhuró gāt/
āyór ha skambhá upamásya nīḻé pathā́ṃ visargé dharúṇeṣu tasthau//

Agni's presence in the three worlds is implied here, according to Sāyaṇa.

10.5.7. ásac ca sác ca paramé víoman dákṣasya jánmann áditer upásthe/
agnír ha naḥ prathamajā́ ṛtásya pū́rva ā́yuni vṛṣabháś ca dhenúḥ

Dakṣa here may well be the sun, and Aditi the earth.

25. Also see *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 26.229–30. There is some debate in early India as to how many verses actually comprise these three sections: 100 according to the Aitareyins, 360 according to the Kauṣītakins, and 2,000 verses as designated by the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*.

26. *Ṛg Veda* 10.30

Geldner calls this "a mystical-speculative song." The speculating poet clings to Agni and wants to discover his mysterious being and origin. He acknowledges heaven and earth as his original parents, but finally he must confess narrow limits are placed on all the speculation, that seven borders are placed to it, which he cannot get beyond, seven symbols or designations of the original thing, behind which the final secret of the world remains hidden. One should compare the conclusion of the spiritually related song 10.129. The song is significant to the extent that it gives an insight into the philosophical schools of that time or movements with the respective idea of the absolutely final.

27. *Ṛg Veda* 10.30.1

prá devatrā́ bráhmaṇe gātúr etu apó áchā mánaso ná práyukti/
mahī́m mitrásya váruṇasya dhāsím pṛthujráyase rīradhā suvṛktím//
10.30.2. ádhvaryavo havíṣmanto hí bhūtá ácha apá itośatīr uśantaḥ/
áva yā́ś cáṣṭe aruṇáḥ suparṇás tám ā́syadhvam ūrmím adyā́ suhastāḥ//

Sāyaṇa says *suparṇa* is the red bird that is the Soma descending from heaven, and *suhasta* is the golden filter that Soma is pressed with.

10.30.3. ádvaryavo apá itā samudrám apā́ṃ nápātaṃ havíṣā yajadhvam/
sá vo dadad ūrmím adyā́ súpūtaṃ tásmai sómam mádhumantaṃ sunota//

10.30.4. yó anidhmó dī́dayad apsú antár yáṃ víprāsa ī́ḷate adhvaréṣu/
ápāṃ napān mádhumatīr apó dā yā́bhir índro vāvṛdhé vīríyāya//

10.30.5. yā́bhiḥ sómo módate hárṣate ca kalyāṇī́bhir yuvatíbhir ná máryaḥ/
tā́ adhvaryo apó áchā párehi yád āsiñcā́ óṣadhībhiḥ punītāt//

According to Sāyaṇa, the young man here is the Soma, and the maidens are the Vasativari waters, mixing together.

10.30.6. evéd yū́ne yuvatáyo namanta yád īm uśánn uśatī́r éti ácha/
sáṃ jānate mánasā sáṃ cikitre adhvaryávo dhiṣáṇā́paś ca devī́ḥ//

10.30.7. yó vo vṛtā́bhyo ákṛṇod ulokáṃ yó vo mahyā́ abhíśaster ámuñcat/
tásmā índrāya mádhumantam ūrmíṃ devamā́danam prá hiṇotanāpaḥ//

10.30.8. prā́smai hinota mádhumantam ūrmíṃ gárbho yó vaḥ sindhavo mádhva útsaḥ/
ghṛtápṛṣṭham ī́ḍiyam adhvaréṣu ā́po revatīḥ śṛṇutā́ hávam me//

10.30.9. táṃ sindhavo matsarám indrapā́nam ūrmím prá heta yá ubhé íyarti/
madacyútam auśānáṃ nabhojā́m pári tritántuṃ vicárantam útsam//

10.30.10. āvárvṛtatīr ádha nú dvidhā́rā goṣuyúdho ná niyaváṃ cárantīḥ/
ṛ́ṣe jánitrīr bhúvanasya pátnīr apó vandasva savṛ́dhaḥ sáyonīḥ//

For *niyavam* I have combined its Vedic sense of mixing with the later sense of being in a continuous line and translated "all together."

10.30.11. hinótā no adhvaráṃ devayajyā́ hinóta bráhma sanáye dhánānām/
ṛtásya yóge ví ṣiyadhvam ū́dhaḥ śruṣṭīvárīr bhūtanāsmábhyam āpaḥ//

10.30.12. ā́po revatīḥ kṣáyathā hí vásvaḥ krátuṃ ca bhadrám bibhṛthā́mṛ́taṃ ca/
rāyáś ca sthá suapatyásya pátnīḥ sárasvatī tád gṛṇaté váyo dhāt//

10.30.13. práti yád ā́po ádṛśram āyatī́r ghṛtám páyāṃsi bíbhratīr mádhūni/
adhvaryúbhir mánasā saṃvidānā́ índrāya sómaṃ súṣutam bhárantīḥ//

14. émā́ agman revátīr jīvádhanyā ádhvaryavaḥ sādáyatā sakhāyaḥ/
ní barhíṣi dhattana somiyāso apā́ṃ náptrā saṃvidānā́sa enāḥ//

15. ā́gmann ā́pa uśatī́r barhír édáṃ ní adhvaré asadan devayántīḥ/
ádhvaryavaḥ sunuténdrāya sómam ábhūd u vaḥ suśákā devayajyā́//

28. Interestingly, an exception is made for a priest who is performing this sacrifice because he desires rain. Perhaps the breathing should require no more hardship than the absence of rain already has caused.

29. *Ṛg Veda* 10.88.1

havíṣ pā́ntam ajáraṃ suvarvídi divispṛ́śi ā́hutaṃ júṣṭam agnaú/
tásya bhármaṇe bhúvanāya devā́ dhármaṇe káṃ svadháyā paprathanta//

See *Nirukta* 7.25 for the explanation of *tasya* as *haviṣaḥ,* or possibly with Agni as Geldner suggests.

10.88.2. gīrṇám bhúvanaṃ támasā́pagūḻham āvíḥ súvar abhavaj jāté agnaú/
tásya devā́ḥ pṛthivī́ dyaúr utā́po áraṇayann óṣadhīḥ sakhyé asya//

10.88.3. devébhir nú iṣitó yajñíyebhir agníṃ stoṣāṇi ajáram bṛhántam/
yó bhānúnā pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m utémā́m ātatā́na ródasī antárikṣam//

10.88.4. yó hótā́sīt prathamó devájuṣṭo yáṃ samā́ñjann ā́jiyenā vṛṇānā́ḥ/
sá patatrí itvaráṃ sthā́ jágad yác chvātrám agnír akṛṇoj jātávedāḥ//

Nirukta 5.7 also discusses this aspect of Jātavedas.

10.88.5. yáj jātavedo bhúvanasya mūrdhánn átiṣṭho agne sahá rocanéna/
táṃ tvāhema matíbhir gīrbhír ukthaíḥ sá yajñiyo abhavo rodasiprā́ḥ//

10.88.6. mūrdhā́ bhuvó bhavati náktam agnís tátaḥ sū́ryo jāyate prātár udyán/
māyā́m ū tú yajñíyānām etā́m ápo yát tū́rṇiś cárati prajānán//

Here I take *māyā* in its more positive sense, "work of art," or "created thing."

10.88.7. dṛśéniyo yó mahinā́ sámiddho árocata divíyonir vibhā́vā/
tásminn agnaú sūktavākéna devā́ havír víśva ā́juhavus tanūpā́ḥ//

Geldner suggests that *tanūpāḥ* could go with *devāḥ,* as Sāyaṇa suggests, or with *haviḥ,* as in 8c.

10.88.8. sūktavākám prathamám ā́d íd agním ā́d íd dhavír ajanayanta devā́ḥ/
sá eṣāṃ yajñó abhavat tanūpā́s táṃ dyaúr veda tám pṛthivī́ tám ā́paḥ//

10.88.9. yáṃ devā́so ájanayanta agníṃ yásminn ā́juhavur bhúvanāni víśvā/
só arcíṣā pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m utémā́m ṛjūyámāno atapan mahitvā́//

10.88.10. stómena hí diví devā́so agním ájījanañ cháktibhī rodasiprā́m/
tám ū akṛṇvan trayidhā́ bhuvé káṃ sá óṣadhīḥ pacati viśvárūpāḥ//

Trayidhā may mean Agni as he exists in the three worlds, as forms of fire here in this world, lightning in the atmosphere, and as the sun in heaven (*Nirukta* 7.28).

10.88.11. yadéd enam ádadhur yajñíyāso diví devā́ḥ sū́riyam āditeyám/
yadā́ cariṣṇū́ mithunā́v ábhūtām ā́d ít prā́paśyan bhúvanāni víśvā//

Mithunāv here as the dawn and the sun: *Yāska* 7.29.

10.88.12. víśvasmā agním bhúvanāya devā́ vaiśvānarám̐ ketúm áhnām akr̥ṇvan/
ā́ yás tatā́na uṣáso vibhātī́r ápo ūrṇoti támo arcíṣā yán//

10.88.13. vaiśvānarám̐ kaváyo yajñíyāso agním̐ devā́ ajanayann ajuryám/
nákṣatram pratnám áminac cariṣṇú yakṣásyā́dhyakṣam̐ taviṣám br̥hántam//

Geldner takes *yakṣa* here as wonder or mystery, following *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.1.1; *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.203; *Kauṣītaki* 95; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.2.3.5.

10.88.14. vaiśvānarám̐ viśváhā dīdivā́m̐sam mántrair agním̐ kavím áchā vadāmaḥ/
yó mahimnā́ paribabhū́va urvī́ utā́vástād utá deváḥ parástāt//

10.88.15. duvé srutī́ aśr̥ṇavam pitr̥̄ṇā́m ahám̐ devā́nām utá mártiyānām/
tā́bhyām idám̐ víśvam éjat sám eti yád antarā́ pitáram mātáram̐ ca//

Sāyaṇa cites the *Gītā* 8.24–26 for the two paths; although they are already present in *Yajur Veda* 9.27. Geldner gives the many other early Upaniṣadic, Brāhmaṇic, and epic citations for this idea in an extended note.

10.88.16. duvé samīcī́ bibhr̥taś cárantam̐ śīrṣató jātám mánasā vímr̥ṣṭam/
sá pratyáṅ víśvā bhúvanāni tasthāv áprayuchan taráṇir bhrā́jamānaḥ//

10.88.17. yátrā vádete ávaraḥ páraś ca yajñaníyoḥ kataró nau ví veda/
ā́ śekur ít sadhamā́dam̐ sákhāyo nákṣanta yajñám̐ ká idám̐ ví vocat//

Geldner points out that the quarrel may well be between the Brāhmaṇa and the Adhvaryu priest; or, following *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 23.45–47, the *hotr̥* and the *adhvaryu*. *Yāska* 7.30, whom Sāyaṇa follows, says that it is between Agni and the gods.

10.88.18. káti agnáyaḥ káti sū́riyāsaḥ káti uṣā́saḥ káti u svid ā́paḥ/
nópaspíjam̐ vaḥ pitaro vadāmi pr̥chā́mi va kavayo vidmáne kám//

See also *R̥g Veda* 8.58.2.

10.88.19. yāvanmātrám uṣáso ná prátīkam̐ suparṇíyo vásate mātariśvaḥ/
tā́vad dadhāti úpa yajñám āyán brāhmaṇó hótur ávaro niṣī́dan//

30. Geldner calls this an "excellent hymn," presumably because it fits a certain aesthetic of speculative hymns during his time of translation. As he writes, "The relationship of the many Agni's to the one Agni Vaiśvānara is the focus, and in general the poet is concerned about the unity or multiplicity of the elements light and water and their forms of appearance as the problem and object of the scholarly disputations."

31. He is sun, lightning, and earthly fire.

32. *R̥g Vidhāna* 3.128cd–132

ājyāhutīś ca juhuyāt tena rakṣām̐si bādhate//
etad rakṣohaṇam̐ śāntiḥ paramaiṣā prakīrtitā/
haviṣpāntīyam̐ ity etat sūktam atra prayojayet//
garhitān nādhayoge ca haviṣpāntīyam abhyaset/
pavitram̐ paramam̐ hy etad dhyātavyam̐ cābhīkṣṇaśaḥ//

ādityе dṛṣṭim āsthāya ṣaṇmāsān niyato 'bhyaset/
devayānaṃ sa panthānaṃ paśyat yād ity amaṇḍale//
vidyā vaiśvānarī cāsya svakāyasthā prakāśate/
haviṣpāntīyam abhyasya sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate//

33. See Heesterman, "Vedic Sacrifice and Transcendence," 93.

CHAPTER 5. THE VEDIC "OTHER"

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1. Grassman, *Wörterbuch Zum Ṛg Veda*.

2. So, too, fire is used to root out the treasure of another wealthy group, the Paṇis, whose myth is that they have stored their wealth in a cave, and fire itself has routed it out (*RV* 6.13.3; 7.9.2).

3. *Ṛg Veda* 1.32

1.32.1. índrasya nú vīríyāṇi prá vocaṃ yā́ni cakā́ra prathamā́ni vajrī́/
áhann áhim ánu apás tatarda prá vakṣaṇā abhinat párvatānām//

1.32.2. áhann áhim párvate śiśriyāṇáṃ tváṣṭāsmai vajraṃ svaríyaṃ tatakṣa/
vāśrā́ iva dhenávaḥ syándamānā áñjaḥ samudrám áva jagmur ā́paḥ//

1.32.3. vṛṣāyámāṇo avṛṇīta sómaṃ tríkadrukeṣu apibat sutásya/
ā́ sā́yakam maghávādatta vájram áhann enam prathamajā́m áhīnām//

The term *trikadrukeṣu* is a triple sacrifice.

1.32.4. yád indrā́han prathamajā́m áhīnām ā́n māyínām ámindruḥ prótá māyā́ḥ/
ā́t sū́riyaṃ janáyan dyā́m uṣā́saṃ tādī́tnā śátruṃ ná kílā vivitse//

1.32.5. áhan vṛtráṃ vṛtratáraṃ víaṃsam índro vájreṇa mahatā́ vadhéna/
skándhāṃsīva kúliśenā vívṛkṇā áhiḥ śayata upapṛ́k pṛthivyā́ḥ//

1.32.6. ayoddhéva durmáda ā́ hí juhvé mahāvīráṃ tuvibādhám ṛjīṣám/
nātārīd asya sámṛtiṃ vadhā́nāṃ sáṃ rujā́nāḥ pipiṣa índraśatruḥ//

1.32.7. apā́d ahastó apṛtanyad índram ā́sya vájram ádhi sā́nau jaghāna/
vṛ́ṣṇo vádhriḥ pratimā́nam búbhūṣan purutrā́ vṛtró aśayad víastaḥ//

1.32.8. nadáṃ ná bhinnám amuyā́ śáyānam máno rúhāṇā áti yanti ā́paḥ/
yā́ś cid vṛtró mahinā́ paryátiṣṭhat tā́sām áhiḥ patsutaḥśī́r babhūva//

1.32.9. nīcāvayā abhavad vṛtráputra índro asyā áva vádhar jabhāra/
úttarā sū́r ádharaḥ putrá āsīd dā́nuḥ śaye sahávatsā ná dhenúḥ//

1.32.10. átiṣṭhantīnām aniveśanā́nāṃ kā́ṣṭhānām mádhye níhitaṃ śárīram/
vṛtrásya niṇyáṃ ví caranti ā́po dīrgháṃ táma āśayad índraśatruḥ//

1.32.11. dāsápatnīr áhigopā atiṣṭhan níruddhā ā́paḥ paṇíneva gā́vaḥ/
apā́m bílam ápihitaṃ yád ā́sīd vṛtrám jaghanvā́m̐ ápa tád vavāra//

1.32.12. áśviyo vā́ro abhavas tád indra sṛké yát tvā pratyáhan devá ékaḥ/
ájayo gā́ áhayaḥ śūra sómam ávāsṛjaḥ sártave saptá sindhūn//

1.32.13. nā́smai vidyún ná tanyatúḥ siṣedha ná yā́m míham ákirad dhrādúniṃ ca/
índraś ca yád yuyudhā́te áhiś ca utā́parī́bhyo maghávā ví jigye//

1.32.14. áher yātā́raṃ kám apaśya indra hṛdí yát te jaghnúṣo bhī́r ágachat/
náva ca yán navatíṃ ca srávantīḥ śyenó ná bhītó átaro rájāṃsi//

1.32.15. índro yātó ávasitasya rā́jā śámasya ca śṛṅgíṇo vájrabāhuḥ/
séd u rā́jā kṣayati carṣaṇīnā́m arā́n ná nemíḥ pári tā́ babhūva//

4. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.92

hairaṇyastūpam indrasya sūktaṃ karmābhisaṃ stavam/
taj japan prayataḥ śatrūn ayatnāt prati bādhate//

5. *Ṛg Veda* 6.73

6.73.1. yó adribhít prathamajā́ ṛtā́vā bṛ́haspátir āṅgirasó havíṣmān/
dvibárhajmā prāgharmasát pitā́ na ā́ ródasī vṛṣabhó roravīti//

6.73.2. jánāya cid yá ī́vata ulokám bṛ́haspátir deváhūtau cakā́ra/
ghnán vṛtrā́ṇi ví púro dardarīti jáyañ chátrūm̐r amítrān pṛtsu sāhan//

6.73.3. bṛ́haspátiḥ sám ajayad vásūni mahó vrajā́n gómato devá eṣaḥ/
apáḥ síṣāsan súvar ápratīto bṛ́haspátir hánti amítram arkaíḥ//

6. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Charles Malamoud shows how the *sattra*'s *viniyoga*s are based on particular patterns having to do with the occurrence of certain words, the mention of a deity, and so forth. See his chapter "Rites and Texts," in *Cooking the World*.

7. *Ṛg Veda* 10.83

10.83.1. yás te manyo ávidhad vajra sāyaka sáha ójaḥ puṣyati víśvam ānuṣák/
sāhyā́ma dā́sam ā́riyaṃ tváyā yujā́ sáhaskṛtena sáhasā sáhasvatā//

10.83.2. manyur índro manyúr evā́sa devó manyúr hótā váruṇo jātávedāḥ/
manyúṃ víśa īḷate mā́nuṣīr yā́ḥ pāhí no manyo tápasā sajóṣāḥ//

10.83.3. abhī́hi manyo tavásas távīyān tápasā yujā́ ví jahi śátrūn/
amitrahā́ vṛtrahā́ dasyuhā́ ca víśvā vásūni ā́ bharā tuváṃ naḥ//

10.83.4. tuváṃ hí manyo abhíbhūtiyojāḥ svayambhū́r bhā́mo abhimātiṣāháḥ/
viśvácarṣaṇiḥ sáhuriḥ sáhāvān asmā́su ójaḥ pṛtanāsu dhehi//

10.83.5. abhāgáḥ sánn ápa páreto asmi táva krátvā taviṣásya pracetaḥ/
táṃ tvā manyo akratúr jihīḷāháṃ suvā́ tanū́r baladéyāya méhi//

Sāyaṇa adds here, for 5d, "in your own body."

10.83.6. ayáṃ te asmi úpa méhi arvā́ṅ pratīcīnáḥ sahure viśvadhāyaḥ/
mányo vajrinn abhí mā́m ā́ vavṛtsva hánāva dásyūm̐r utá bodhi āpéḥ//

10.83.7. abhí préhi dakṣiṇató bhavā me ádhā vṛtrā́ṇi jaṅghanāva bhū́ri/
juhómi te dharúṇam mádhvo ágram ubhā́ upāṃśú prathamā́ pibāva//

8. *Ṛg Veda* 10.84 (also used in *Kauśika Sūtra* 14.26 for success in battle)

10.84.1. tváyā manyo sarátham ārujánto hárṣamāṇāso dhṛṣitā́ marutvaḥ/
tigméṣava ā́yudhā saṃśíśānā abhí prá yantu náro agnírūpāḥ//

10.84.2. agnír' va manyo tviṣitáḥ sahasva senānī́r naḥ sahure hūtá edhi/
hatvā́ya śátrūn ví bhajasva véda ójo mímāno ví mṛ́dho nudasva//

Cf. *Ṛg Veda* 2.17.26; 10.182.2d.

10.84.3. sáhasva manyo abhímātim asmé ruján mṛṇán pramṛṇán préhi śátrūn/
ugrám̐ te pā́jo nanú ā́ rurudhre vaśī́ váśaṃ nayasa ekaja tvám//

10.84.4. éko bahūnā́m asi manyav īḻitó víśaṃ-viśaṃ yudháye sáṃ śiśādhi/
akṛttaruk tuváyā yujā́ vayáṃ dyumántaṃ ghóṣaṃ vijayā́ya kṛṇmahe//

10.84.5. vijeṣakṛ́d índra ivānavabravó asmā́kam manyo adhipā́ bhavehá/
priyáṃ te nā́ma sahure gṛṇīmasi vidmā́ tám útsaṃ yáta ābabhū́tha//

10.84.6. ā́bhūtiyā sahajā́ vajra sāyaka sáho bibharṣi abhibhūta úttaram/
krátvā no manyo sahá medī́ edhi mahādhanásya puruhūta saṃsṛ́ji//

Following Geldner, for 6c, we might also read, "according to our purpose."

10.84.7. sáṃsṛṣṭaṃ dhánam ubháyaṃ samā́kṛtam asmábhyaṃ dattāṃ váruṇaś ca manyúḥ/
bhíyaṃ dádhānā hṛ́dayeṣu śátravaḥ párājitāso ápa ní layantām//

In 7a, following Sāyaṇa, *ubhaya* could mean wealth both animate and inanimate.

9. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 3.77–78

yás te manyo iti sadā sapatnaghne tvime japet
ghṛtenābhihutaṃ dvābhyāṃ dhārayed āyasaṃ maṇim/
juhuyād āyusam śaṇkumābhyām eva catur dáśīm//
khādire dhmasam iddhe 'gnau sapatnan pratibādhate

10. *Ṛg Veda* 1.50

According to the Anukramaṇī, the first ten verses of this hymn are a cure for jaundice; the last three are a cure against enemies and obstacles. Kenneth Zysk has provided an excellent analysis and translation, which I follow for the most part (Zysk, *Religious Medicine,* 34–44; Zysk, "Fever in Vedic India," 617–21). See my "Making the Canon Commonplace," for a fuller treatment of this hymn.

1.50.1. úd u tyáṃ jātávedasaṃ deváṃ vahanti ketávaḥ/
dṛśé víśvāya sū́r*i*yam//

For 1ab, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 2.11.6, the steeds of Sūrya.

1.50.2. ápa tyé tāyávo yathā nákṣatrā yant*i* aktúbhiḥ/
sū́rāya viśvácakṣase//

1.50.3 ádṛśram asya ketávo ví raśmáyo jánāṁ ánu/
bhrā́janto agnáyo yathā//

Cf. *Atharva Veda* 13.2.1.

1.50.4. taráṇir viśvádarśato jyotiṣkṛ́d asi sūriya/
víśvam ā́ bhāsi rocanám//

For 4a, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 7.63.4b.

1.50.5. pratyáṅ devā́nāṃ víśaḥ pratyáṅṅ úd eṣi mā́nuṣān/
pratyáṅ víśvaṃ súvar dṛśé//

For 5c, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 7.77.2; 8.49.8; 9.61.18; 10.136.1.

1.50.6. yénā pavāka cákṣasā bhuraṇyántaṃ jánāṁ ánu/
t*u*váṃ varuṇa páśyasi//

1.50.7. ví dyā́m eṣi rájas pṛthú áhā mímāno aktúbhiḥ/
páśyañ jánmāni sūriya//

For 7b, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 2.19.3.

1.50.8. saptá tvā haríto ráthe váhanti deva sūriya/
śocíṣkeśaṃ vicakṣaṇa//

For 8ab, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 7.66.15cd.

1.50.9. áyukta saptá śundhyúvaḥ sū́ro ráthasya naptíyaḥ/
tā́bhir yāti sváyuktibhiḥ//

For 9c, cf. *Ṛg Veda* 1.119.4.

1.50.10. úd vayáṃ támasas pári jyótiṣ páśyanta úttaram/
deváṃ devatrā́ sū́riyam áganma jyótir uttamám//

1.50.11. udyánn adyá mitramaha āróhann úttarāṃ dívam/
hṛdrogám máma sūriya harimā́ṇaṃ ca nāśaya//

1.50.12. śúkeṣu me harimā́ṇaṃ ropaṇā́kāsu dadhmasi/
átho hāridravéṣu me harimā́ṇaṃ ní dadhmasi//

For 12b, Sāyaṇa translates Sārika, the yellow Indian starling. For 12c, one might read another yellow bird; cf. *Ṛg Veda* 8.35.7.

1.50.13. úd agād ayám ādityó víśvena sáhasā sahá/
dviṣántam máhya randháyan mó aháṃ dviṣaté radham//

11. Heesterman, *Inner Conflict of Tradition,* 71–74; also see *SB* 11.6.3.11; 10.3.3.5; 10.3.4.2; 11.4.1.9; 11.5.3.13; 11.6.2.1; 11.6.4.10.

12. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.101–04

raugair gṛhīto 'rogī ca praskaṇvasyottamaṃ tṛcam/
ārogyam etat prayato japen nityam anekaśaḥ//
uttamas tasya cārdharco dviṣaddveṣa iti smṛtaḥ/
yaṃ dviṣyāt tam abhidhyāyed dṛṣṭvā cainaṃ japed idam//
āgaskṛc cet trirātreṇa vidveṣaṃ saṃniyacchati/
udayaty āyur akṣayyaṃ tejo madhyaṃ dine japan//
astaṃ vrajati sūrye tu dviṣantaṃ pratibādhate/
ojas tejas tathārogyaṃ dviṣaddveṣaṃ prakīrtitam//

13. *Ṛg Veda* 10.166

10.166.1. ṛṣabhám mā samānā́nāṃ sapátnānāṃ viṣāsahím/
hantā́raṃ śátrūṇāṃ kṛdhi virā́jaṃ gópatiṃ gávām//

10.166.2. ahám asmi śápatnahā́ índra 'vā́riṣṭo ákṣata/
adháḥ sapátnā me padór imé sárve abhíṣṭhitāḥ//

10.166.3. átraivá vó 'pi nahyāmi ubhé ā́rtnī iva jyáyā/
vā́cas pate ní ṣedhemā́n yáthā mád ádharaṃ vádān//

For 3b, cf *Atharva Veda* 1.1.3b; for 3d, cf. *Atharva Veda* 5.11.6, *adhovacasaḥ.*

10.166.4. abhibhū́r ahám ā́gamaṃ viśvákarmeṇa dhā́manā/
ā́ vaś cittám ā́ vo vratám ā́ vo'háṃ sámitiṃ dade//

For 4b, Sāyaṇa has *sarvakarmakṣameṇa tejasā*. This might be, therefore a direct reference to the god Viśvakarman, the "All-Maker," as well as "through the power of all deeds." For the three occurrences of *cittam, vratam,* and *samiti,* see also *Atharva Veda* 6.64.2; *Ṛg Veda* 10.191.3.

10.166.5. yogakṣemám̐ va ādā́ya ahám bhūyāsam uttamá
ā́ vo mūrdhā́nam akramīm
adhaspadā́n ma úd vadata
maṇḍū́kā iva udakā́n maṇḍū́kā udakā́d iva//

14. Verses with a "Short" History and "Long" Magic.

In addition to the regular-length hymns of the *Ṛg Veda,* a similar situation exists with the single verse, *Ṛg Veda* 6.2.11. *Ṛg Veda* 6.2 is a hymn quite similar to that of *Ṛg Veda* 1.32, where the deeds and exploits of Indra are extolled. However, it has no real interpretive history aside from that of its use in the commonplace Vidhāna material. The verse is as follows:

6.2.11. áchā no mitramaho deva devā́n ágne vócaḥ sumatíṃ ródas*ī*yoḥ/
vīhí s*u*astíṃ sukṣitíṃ divó nṝ́n dviṣó áṃhāṃsi duritā́ tarema
tā́ tarema távā́vasā tarema//

This hymn exalts Soma, but has in fact no other public ritual usages in the *Ṛg Veda*. However, *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.111 characterizes this as follows:

> One should worship the blazing fire with the verse beginning *"Accha na";* then, having obtained intelligence, one can conquer one's enemies and can surmount difficulties.

Here once again, the Soma that allows for the maintenance of intelligence on the part of the mutterer.

15. RV 7.104.1.

índrāsomā tápataṃ rákṣa ubjátaṃ n*í* arpayataṃ vṛṣaṇā tamovṛ́dhaḥ/
párā śṛṇītam acíto n*í* oṣataṃ hatáṃ nudéthāṃ ní śiśītam atríṇaḥ//

7.104.2. índrāsomā sám aghā́śaṃsam abhy àghám tápur yayastu carúr agnivā́m̐ iva/
brhmadvíṣe kravyā́de ghorácakṣase dvéṣo dhattam anavāyáṃ kimīdíne//

See also *Ṛg Veda* 6.62.8 for the use of *agham* and *tapuḥ*. Sāyaṇa takes *abhi* in the sense of "overpowering," and *tapuḥ* as "glowing."

7.104.3. índrāsomā duṣkṛ́to vavré antár anārambhaṇé támasi prá vidhyatam/
yáthā nā́taḥ púnar ékaś canódáyat tád vām astu sáhase manyumác chávaḥ//

7.104.4. índrāsomā vartáyataṃ divó vadháṃ sám pṛthivyā aghā́śaṃsāya tárhaṇam/
út takṣataṃ svar*í*yam párvatebh*i*yo yéna rákṣo vāvṛdhānáṃ nijūrvathaḥ//

7.104.5. índrāsomā vartáyataṃ divás pár*i* agnitaptébhir yuvám áśmahanmabhiḥ/
tápurvadhebhir ajárebhir atríṇo ní párśāne vidhyataṃ yántu nisvarám//

The sense is unclear here. Cf. *Ṛg Veda* 2.30.4. Following Geldner (274, n52) *aśmahanmabhiḥ* and *tapurvadhebhir* might mean "with glowing falling rocks; with fire weapons which don't wear themselves out."

7.104.6. índrāsomā pári vām bhūtu viśváta iyám matíḥ kakṣ*i*yā́śveva vājínā/
yā́ṃ vāṃ hótrām parihinómi medháy*ā i*mā brámāṇi nṛpátīva jinvatam//

7.104.7. práti smarethām̐ tujáyadbhir évair hatám̐ druhó rakṣáso bhaṅgurā́vataḥ/
índrāsomā duṣkṛ́te mā́ sugám bhūd yó naḥ kadā́ cid abhidā́sati druhā́//

7.104.8. yó mā pā́kena mánasā cárantam abhicáṣṭe ánṛtebhir vácobhiḥ/
ā́pa iva kāśínā sáṃgṛbhītā ásann ast*u* ā́sata indra vaktā́//

Note here that the "falsehood" is the more cosmic *anṛta*.

7.104.9. yé pākaśaṃsám viháranta évair yé vā bhadrám dūṣáyanti svadhā́bhiḥ/
áhaye vā tā́n pradádātu sóma ā́ vā dadhātu nírṛter upásthe//

7.104.10. yó no rásaṃ dípsati pitvó agne yó áśvānāṃ yó gávāṃ yás tanū́nām/
ripú stená steyakṛ́d dabhrám etu ní ṣá hīyatāṃ tan*ú*vā tánā ca//

7.104.11. paráḥ só astu tanúvā tánā ca tisráḥ pṛthivī́r adhó astu víśvāḥ/
práti śuṣyatu yáśo asya devā yó no dívā dípsati yáś ca náktam//

7.104.12. suvijñānám cikitúṣe jánāya sác cā́sac ca vácasī paspṛdhāte/
táyor yát satyáṃ yatarád ṛ́jīyas tád ít sómo avati hánti ā́sat//

Here, the opposition of *sat* and *asat* is used; however, the opposition is not placed in its usual philosophical contexts but as those things that emerge from the mouth of the speaker.

7.104.13. ná vā́ u sómo vṛjinám hinoti ná kṣatríyam mithuyā́ dhāráyantam/
hánti rákṣo hánt*i* ā́sad vádantam ubhā́v índrasya prásitau śayāte//

7.104.14. yádi vāhám ánṛtadeva ā́sa mógham vā devā́m̐ ap*i*ūhé agne/
kím asmábhyaṃ jātavedo hṛṇīṣe droghavā́cas te nirṛthám sacantām//

7.104.15. adyā́ murīya yádi yātudhā́no ásmi yádi vā́yus tatápa pū́ruṣasya/
ádhā sá vīvaír daśábhir ví yūyā yó mā mógham yā́tudhānét*i* ā́ha//

7.104.16. yó mā́yātuṃ yā́tudhānet*i* ā́ha yó vā rakṣā́ḥ śúcir asmī́t*i* ā́ha/
índras tám hantu mahatā́ vadhéna víśvasya jantór adhamás padīṣṭa//

In other forms of Vedic commentary (*BD*, and so forth), this verse is part of a larger story of how the *ṛṣi* is able to discern the identity of Indra in the midst of adversity.

7.104.17. prá yā́ jígāti khargáleva náktam ápa druhā́ tan*ú*vaṃ gū́hamānā/
vavrā́m̐ anantā́m̐ áva sā́ padīṣṭa grā́vāṇo ghnantu rakṣása upabdaíḥ//

7.104.18. ví tiṣṭhadhvam maruto vikṣú ichátа gṛbhāyáta rakṣásaḥ sám pinaṣṭana/
váyo yé bhūtvī́ patáyanti naktábhir yé vā rípo dadhiré devé adhvaré//

7.104.19. prá vartaya divó áśmānam indra sómaśitam maghavan sáṃ śiśādhi/
prā́ktād ápāktād adharā́d údaktād abhí jahi rakṣásaḥ párvatena//

Cf. *Ṛg Veda* 1.121.9; 7.72.5; 10.87.21.

7.104.20. etá u tyé patayanti śváyātava índraṃ dipsanti dipsávo ádābhiyam/
śíśīte śakráḥ píśunebhiyo vadhám nūnáṃ sṛjad aśánim yātumádbhiyaḥ//

7.104.21. índro yātūnā́m abhavat parāśaró havirmáthīnām abhí āvívāsatām/
abhī́d u śakráḥ paraśúr yáthā vánam pā́treva bhindán satá eti rakṣásaḥ//

7.104.22. úlūkayātum śuśulū́kayātuṃ jahí śváyātum utá kókayātum/
suparṇáyātum utá gṛ́dhrayātum dṛṣádeva prá mṛṇa rákṣa indra/

Koka is, according to Sāyaṇa, a kind of goose.

7.104.23. mā́ no rákṣo abhí naḍ yātumā́vatām ápochatu mithunā́ yā́ kimīdínā/
pṛthivī́ naḥ pā́rthivāt pātu áṃhaso antárikṣam diviyā́t pātu asmā́n//

7.104.24. índra jahí púmāṃsaṃ yātudhā́nam utá stríyam māyáyā śā́śadānām/
vígrīvāso mū́radevā ṛdantu mā́ té dṛśan sū́riyam uccárantam//

7.104.25. práti cakṣva ví cakṣuva índraś ca soma jāgṛtam/
rákṣobhyo vadhám asyatam aśániṃ yātumádbhiyaḥ//

16. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.157–58

yo 'ribhiḥ pratipadyeta abhiśasyeta vā mṛṣā/
upoṣyaikaṃ trirātraṃ sa juhuyād ājyam anvaham//
indrāsometi sūktaṃ tu japec caitac chatāvaram/
kiñcid dadyād dvijebhyo 'nte stṛṇute sarvaśātravān//

17. *Ṛg Veda* 10.177

10.177.1. pataṃgám aktám ásurasya māyáyā hṛdā́ paśyanti mánasā vipaścítaḥ/
samudré antáḥ kaváyo ví cakṣate márīcīnām padám ichanti vedhásaḥ//

10.177.2. pataṃgó vā́cam mánasā bibharti tā́ṃ gandharvó avadad gárbhe antáḥ/
tā́ṃ dyótamānāṃ svarı́yam manīṣā́m ṛtásya padé kaváyo ní pānti//

10.177.3. ápaśyaṃ gopā́m ánipadyamānam ā́ ca párā ca pathíbhiś cárantam/
sá sadhrī́cīḥ sá víṣūcīr vásāna ā́ varīvarti bhúvaneṣ*u* antáḥ//

18. See, among others, Ronnow, "Zur Erklarung des Pravargya"; Kashikar, "Avāntaradīkṣā of Pravargya"; and Kashikar, "Apropos of the Pravargya"; Gonda, "A Propos of the Mantras in the Pravargya Section of the Ṛg Vedic Brāhmaṇas"; Van Buitenen, *Pravargya;* Houben, *Pravargya Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka;* and Brereton, "*Pravargya Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka:* Review Article," 179.

19. Van Buitenen, *Pravargya*.

20. Houben, *Pravargya Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.

21. Ibid., 27.

22. Houben, "On the Earliest Attestable Forms," and "Ritual Pragmatics." Also see Gonda, "A Propos of the Mantras in the Pravargya."

23. Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 525.

24. Ibid., 512.

25. If the poet could have been persuaded to designate it, we do not know whether he would have spoken of *prāṇa,* or rather of, for instance, *asu,* a term designated in *Ṛg Veda* 1.164.4. Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 510.

26. Houben ("Ritual Pragmatics," 508–9) provides us with an excellent summary of the arguments about these verses 1.164.31 and 10.177.3: in 1875 Haug ("Vedische Rathselfragen") argues that this protector (or herdsman) is the sun; Ludwig ("Der Rig Veda") follows him in 1894; and Henry (*L'Atharvaveda*) assumes that the problematic phrase "constantly revolving in the midst of the worlds" is an astronomical referent. In his own thinking, Geldner (*Der Rig Veda*) felt that the verse referred to *prāṇa*, "life breath"; Houben thinks with Geldner that "while *prāṇa* is not found in these verses, it can still be justified by referring to the riddle character of the hymn" (Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 508.) Geldner bolstered this argument by saying that the herdsman as sun "in diesem Sinne schon fruhzeitig umgedeutet" (Geldner, *Der Rig Veda,* 233). In 1959, Luders writes that "wie immer man sich hinsichtlich der Strophe in 1.164 entscheidet" (*Varuṇa*, 613). Renou also thinks verse 31 refers to the sun, but he leaves open

the secondary *prāṇa* interpretation. Elizarenkova (*Rig Veda*) considers both possible. (Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 509n59.)

27. Geldner, *Rig Veda,* 233; Gonda *Vision of the Vedic Poets,* 28.

28. Gonda, *Eye and Gaze*, 55; Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 510n62.

29. Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 527. He also mentions the work of Porzig ("Das Ratsel im Rig Veda"), who did not realize how much and how systematically the worldview expressed in the hymn is paralleled and illustrated in the ritual. This kind of parallelism is precisely the kind of "mirroring" act of metonymy that we have been discussing in this book.

30. See, among Deshpande's many publications, "Ṛg Vedic Retroflexion" in his edited volume *Āryan and Non-Āryan in India,* 297; and perhaps most helpfully, Deshpande, *Sociolinguistic Attitudes in India*. For a development in his explorations of fluidity in classification of the "other" in early India, see Deshpande's more recent "Āryans, Non-Āryans, and Brāhmaṇas: Processes of Indigenization"; and Deshpande, "Vedic Āryans, Non-Vedic Āryans, and Non-Āryans: Judging the Linguistic Evidence of the Veda."

31. Bronkhorst, "Is There an Inner Conflict of Tradition?"

32. Hock, "Through a Glass Darkly."

33. Witzel "Āryan and non-Āryan Names in Vedic India."

34. A large proportion of the "applications" of Ṛg Vedic hymns in the Vidhāna text refer to mantras that are efficacious before setting out on a journey, or benedictions of the path ahead, and so forth. Moreover, the Vidhāna text also betrays a classical concern for protecting ritual purity of both brahmin and mantra from the eyes and ears of a *śūdra*. These concerns for purity betray the fact that the brahmin is more vulnerable to pollution, by virtue of contact with defiling elements in a greater number of arenas. Finally, the *Ṛg Vidhāna* is at pains to point out the need for the payment of fees in all situations; it is the particular point of view of the Śaunaka school that the brahmin cannot perform any mantra recitation for which he does not receive fees (4.132–35).

35. See, among many examples, *Vaikhānasāsmārta Sūtra* 4.10–12 for the worship of Viṣṇu in this manner; 3.22b on the mention of a visit to a temple.

36. See Douglas, *Natural Symbols,* 144.

Chapter 6. A History of the Quest for Mental Power

1. This large bibliography was cited in chapter 3, n2 . But for a discussion of the specifics of this vocabulary, see Renou, "Sur la Notion de Bráhman"; Renou, "Études Védiques 3.e: Kavi"; Renou, "Les Pouvoirs de la Parole dans le Hymnes Védiques"; Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*; Gonda, *Vision of the Vedic Poets*; Thieme, "Brahman"; and Thieme, "Review of Renou"; Velankar, "Kavi and Kāvya in the ṚgVeda"; Bhawe, "Conception of a Muse of Poetry in the Ṛgveda."

2. Thieme, "Brahman," 102–3; cited also in Findly, "Mantra Kaviśasta," 30.

3. Kuiper, "Ancient Indian Verbal Contest," 217–81.

4. Thieme, "Vorzarathustrisches bei den Zarathustriern und bei Zarathustra," 69.

5. Findly, "Mantra," 43.
6. *Ṛg Veda* 1.18.6

sádasas pátiṃ ádbhutam priyám índrasya kā́miyam/
saním medhā́m ayāsiṣam//

7. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2.3.6.
8. Other parts of the Veda include particularly the *matranāmnis,* the *mahāvrata,* and the *upaniṣad.*
9. *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.22.11–20

1.22.11. ācārya samanvārabdhe juhuyāt sadaspatim adbhūtam iti

1.22.12. sāvitryā dvitiyam

1.22.13. yadyat kiṃcāt urdhvam anuktaṃ syāt

1.22.14. ṛṣibhyastṛtīyam

1.22.15. saviṣ akṛtaṃ caturtham

1.22.16. brāhmaṇān bhojayitvā vedasamāptiṃ vācayita

1.22.17. ata urdhvam akṣārālavaṇāṣī brahmacārya dhaḥṣāyī dvādaṣarātraṃ samvatsaraṃ vā

1.22.18. caritavratāya medhājananam karoti

1.22.19. anindatāyāṃ diṣekamulaṃpalāṣaṃ kuśastambam vā palāṣāpcāre pradakṣiṇam udakumbhena triḥ pariṣiñcantaṃ vācayati/ suśravaḥ suśravā asi yathā tvaṃ suśravaḥ suśravā asyevaṃ māṃ suśrava sauśravasaṃ kuru/ yathā tvaṃ devānāṃ yajñasya nidhipo 'syevam aham manuṣāṇām vedasya nidhipo bhūyāsam iti

1.22.20. Etena vāpanādi paridānāntaṃ vratādeśanaṃ vyākhyātam

10. *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.10

yád vā́g vádanti avicetanā́ni rā́ṣṭrī devā́nāṃ niṣasā́da mandrā́/
cátasra ū́rjaṃ duduhe páyāṃsi kúva svid asyāḥ paramáṃ jagāma//

Sāyaṇa here thinks that Vāc is the thunder (cf. 8.69.14) and the best portion of Vāc is the rain, which, in typical Vedic cosmology, either falls to the earth or is taken up by the rays of the sun.

8.100.11. devī́ṃ vā́cam ajanayanta devā́s tā́ṃ viśvárūpāḥ paśávo vadanti/
sā́ no mandrā́ íṣam ū́rjaṃ dúhānā dhenúr vā́g asmā́n úpa súṣṭutaítu//

Sāyaṇa argues that Vāc, as the thunder, enters into all beings (breathing ones) and speaks of *dharma (Eṣā mādhyamikā vāk sarvaprāṇyantargatā dharmābhivādinī bhavati).*

11. *Ṛg Veda* 8.100.9

samudré antáḥ śayata udnā́ vájro abhī́vṛtaḥ/
bháranti asmai saṃyátaḥ puráḥprasravaṇā́ balím//

12. *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.7–9

samāpyoṃ prāksvastīti japitvā mahitrīṇāṃ ity anumantrya
evam iti sṛṣṭasya na kutaścid bhayaṃ bhavatīti vijñāyate
vayasām manojña vācaḥ śrutvā kanikradajjanuṣaṃ prabru vāṇa iti sukta japed devīṃ vācam ajanayanta devā iti ca

The next verses contain another rite for warding off the unpleasant voices of deer, or for warding off the intruder with a firebrand or a churning stick, as well as a powerful mantra.

13. See *Bṛhaddevatā* 4.66–70, and my discussion of this episode in *Myth as Argument,* ch. 7.

14. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.183cd–184ab

yad vāg iti dvṛcenaitya gaurīṃ yo 'rcati suvrataḥ
tasya nāsaṃskṛtā vāṇī mukhād uccarate kvacit

15. *Ṛg Veda* 8.101.11–16

8.101.11. báṇ mahā́m̐ asi sūriya báḷ āditya mahā́m̐ asi/
mahás te sató mahimā́ panasyate addhā́ deva mahām̐ asi//

See also *Sāma Vidhāna* 1.3.2.4.4; 2.9.1.9.1 for this very basic praise of might and strength.

8.101.12. báṭ sūriya śrávasā mahā́m̐ asi satrā́ deva mahā́m̐ asi/
mahnā́ devā́nām asuryàḥ puróhito vibhú jyótir ádābhiyam//

See also *Sāma Vidhāna* 2.9.1.9.2; *Yajur Veda* 33.40. Sāyaṇa sees *asurya* as *asurāṇām hanta*–the killing of *asura*s.

8.101.13. iyáṃ yā́ nī́cī arkíṇī rūpā́ róhiṇiyā kṛtā́/
citrā́ iva práti adarśi āyatī́ antár daśásu bāhúṣu/

"She" here is Uṣas, the dawn.

8.101.14. prajā́ ha tisró atiā́yam īyur ní anyā́ arkám abhíto viviśre/
bṛhád dha tasthau bhúvaneṣu antáḥ pávamāno harítа ā́ viveśa//

Regarding these three kinds of creatures, Sāyaṇa reminds us of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 2.5.1, where Prajāpati creates three kinds of creatures—birds, small snakes, and serpents—that died. He felt that they were denied nourishment; thus, he created milk in his own breasts. The fourth kind, the "others," were those who received this food.

8.101.15. mātā́ rudrā́ṇāṃ duhitā́ vásūnāṃ svásādityā́nām amṛ́tasya nā́bhiḥ/
prá nú vocaṃ cikitúṣe jánāya mā́ gā́m ánāgām áditiṃ vadhiṣṭa//

8.101.16. vacovídaṃ vā́cam udīráyantīṃ víśvābhir dhībhír upatíṣṭhamānām/
devī́ṃ devébhyaḥ pári eyúṣīṃ gā́m ā́ māvṛkta mártiyo dabhrácetāḥ//

Sāyaṇa comments here that men do not utter speech when they are hungry but begin to speak when they have eaten food.

16. The *āśvinaśastra* is recited after the *paryāya*. The *paryāya* is a chanting of a triplet, which in turn is also chanted in three.

17. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.184cd–185ab

baṇ mahāṃ iti dṛṣṭvārkam upatiṣṭhed dvṛcaṃ paṭhan
bruvann apy anṛtāṃ vāṇīṃ lipyate nānṛtena saḥ

18. See *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 13.23.6–7.

CHAPTER 7. THE POETICS OF PATHS

1. *Katyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 12.10.31, 14.3.11; *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* 6.5; *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.4; *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra* 3.4.30.

2. See also *Kāthaka Samhitā* 13.10; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14.2.1.8.

3. See also *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* 5.2.

4. *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.13.14; *Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra* 26.12; *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 4.4.6.

5. *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 2.22, 56.1; *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra* 5.13.1

6. *Ṛg Veda* 1.42

1.42.1. sám pūṣann ádhvanas tira ví áṃho vimuco napāt/
sákṣvā deva prá ṇas puráḥ//

1.42.2. yó naḥ pūṣann aghó vṛ́ko duḥśéva ādídeśati/
ápa sma tám pathó jahi//

See also *Ṛg Veda* 10.133.4; *Atharva Veda* 6.6.3; Geldner emphasizes that the threatening happens also with words.

1.42.3. ápa tyam paripanthínam muṣīvā́ṇaṃ huraścítam/
dūrám ádhi srutér aja//

1.42.4. tuváṃ tásya dyavāvíno aghásaṃsasya kásya cit
padā́bhí tiṣṭha tápuṣim//

1.42.5. ā́ tát te dasra mantumaḥ pū́ṣann ávo vṛṇīmahe/
yéna pitṝ́n ácodayaḥ//

See also *Ṛg Veda* 1.46.2.

1.42.6. ádhā no viśvasaubhaga híraṇyavāśīmattama/
dhánāni suṣáṇā kṛdhi//

1.42.7. áti naḥ saścáto naya sugā́ naḥ supáthā kṛṇu/
pū́ṣann ihá krátuṃ vidaḥ//

1.42.8. abhí sūyávasaṃ naya ná navajvāró ádhvane/
pū́ṣann ihá krátuṃ vidaḥ//

1.42.9. śagdhí pūrdhí prá yaṃsi ca śíśīhí prā́si udáram/
pū́ṣann ihá krátuṃ vidaḥ//

1.42.10. ná pūṣáṇam methāmasi sūktaír abhí gṛṇīmasi/
vásūni dasmám īmahe//

7. Also perhaps prophylactically, the *Khādira Gṛyha Sūtra* uses this same hymn in the *niṣkramaṇa* ceremony — a delightful ceremony in which the child is taken out into the open air. It is one performed in the fourth month after birth, where the father causes the child to look at the sun. It is called *āditydarśana,* or "sun-sight" (*KhGS* 37) and is related to another ceremony, *candradarśana,* or moon-sight. In this rite, the child is bathed by the father in the morning and dressed by the mother. The mother passes the child to the father, who then hands him back to the mother. Then the father makes a libation of water with his face toward the moon (*GGS* 2.8.1–7). Here, the hymn to Pūṣan anticipates an entire life of the child — the sun is implicitly identified with Pūṣan, and the family becomes the voice of the petitioner. "Whatever roads this child may

choose to take, please protect him in all of the ways named in these mantras. Indeed, even in this preliminary journey out into the open air, let Pūṣan protect him."

8. *Ṛg Veda* 1.99 (see also *RV* 1.97.9; 10.56.7; cf. 1.41.3, and my *Myth as Argument*, 371–75)

jātávedase sunavāma sómam arātīyató ní dahāti védaḥ/
sá naḥ parṣad áti durgā́ṇi víśvā nāvéva sínidhuṃ duritā́ti agníḥ//

9. See my *Myth as Argument*, 153–57.

10. *Ṛg Veda* 1.189

1.189.1. ágne náya supáthā rāyé asmā́n víśvāni deva vayúnāni vidvā́n/
yuyodhí asmáj juhurāṇám éno bhū́yiṣṭhāṃ te námaüktiṃ vidhema//

1.189.2. ágne tuváṃ pārayā návyo asmā́n suastíbhir áti durgā́ṇi víśvā/
pū́ś ca pṛthvī́ bahulā́ na urvī́ bhávā tokā́ya tánayāya śáṃ yóḥ//

1.189.3. ágne tvā́m asmád yuyodhi ámīvā ánagnitrā abhi ámanta kṛṣṭī́ḥ/
púnar asmábhyaṃ suvitā́ya deva kṣā́ṃ víśvebhir amṛ́tebhir yajatra//

1.189.4. pāhí no agne pāyúbhir ájasrair utá priyé sádana ā́ śuśukvā́n/
mā́ te bhayám jaritā́raṃ yaviṣṭha nūnáṃ vidan mā́ aparáṃ sahasvaḥ//

1.189.5. mā́ no agne áva sṛjo aghā́ya aviṣyáve ripáve duchúnāyai/
mā́ datváte dáśate mā́date no mā́ rī́ṣate sahasāvan parā́ dāḥ//

1.189.6. ví gha tuvā́vām̐ ṛtajāta yaṃsad gṛṇānó agne tanúve várūtham/
víśvād ririkṣór utá vā ninitsór abhihrútām ási hí deva viṣpaṭ//

1.189.7. tuváṃ tā́m̐ agna ubháyān ví vidvā́n véṣi prapitvé mánuṣo yajatra/
abhipitvé mánave śā́siyo bhūr marmṛjénya uśígbhir ná akráḥ//

1.189.8. avocāma nivácanāni asmin mā́nasya sūnúḥ sahsāné agnaú/
vayáṃ sahásram ṛ́ṣibhiḥ sanema vidyā́meṣáṃ vṛjánaṃ jīrádānum//

11. See also *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhya Sūtra* 2.16.2; *Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* 2.18.

12. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.148cd–150ab

utpathapratipanno yo braṣṭo vāpi pathaḥ kvacit//
panthānam pratipadyeta kṛtvā vā karma garhitam/
agne nayeti suktena pratyṛcaṃ juhuyād ghrtam//
japaṃṣca prayato nityam upatiṣṭheta cānalam/
snātvā japed anarvāṇaṃ namaskṛtya bṛhaspatim//

13. *Ṛg Veda* 3.45

3.45.1. ā́ mandraír indra háribhir yāhí mayū́raromabhiḥ/
mā tvā ké cin ní yaman víṃ nā́ pāśíno áti dhánveva tām̐ ihi//

3.45.2. vṛtrakhādó valaṃrujáḥ purā́ṃ darmó apā́m ajáḥ/
sthātā ráthasya háriyor abhisvará índro dṝḷhā́ cid ārujáḥ//

3.45.3. gambhīrā́m̐ udadhīm̐r iva krátum puṣyasi gā́ iva/
prá sugopā́ yávasaṃ dhenávo yathā hradáṃ kulyā́ ivāśata//

3.45.4. ā́ nas tújaṃ rayím bhara áṃśaṃ ná pratijānaté/
vṛkṣám pakvám phálam aṅkīva dhūnuhi índra sampā́raṇaṃ vásu//

3.45.5. svayúr indra svarā́ḷ asi smāddiṣṭiḥ sváyaśastaraḥ/
sá vāvṛdhāná ójasā puruṣṭuta bhávā naḥ suśrávastamaḥ//

14. *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* 14.2.3.

15. The story is given by Sāyaṇa, quoting *Yāska* 2.24, that Viśvāmitra, the family priest of Sudas, was returning home with much wealth when he encountered the confluence of the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī and asked them to become fordable. The story is also given in *Bṛhaddevatā* 4.106–10, and discussed as a myth in my book, *Myth as Argument,* ch. 12. The other names of the rivers are given as Vipaṣa and Ṣatudra and may be the contemporary rivers Beyah and Satlaj.

Ṛg Veda 3.33

3.33.1. prá párvatānām uśatī́ upásthād áśve iva viṣíte hā́samāne/
gā́veva śubhre mātárā rihāṇé vípāṭ chutudrī́ páyasā javete//

3.33.2. índreṣite prasavám bhíkṣamāṇe áchā samudrám̐ rathíyeva yāthaḥ/
samārāṇé ūrmíbhiḥ pínvamāne anyā́ vām anyā́m ápi eti śubhre/

3.33.3. áchā síndhum mātṛ́tamām ayāsaṃ vípāśam urvī́ṃ subhágām aganma/
vatsám iva mātarā saṃrihāṇé samānáṃ yónim ánu saṃcárantī//

3.33.4. enā́ vayam páyasā pínvamānā ánu yóniṃ devákṛtaṃ cárantīḥ/
ná vártave prasaváḥ sárgataktaḥ kiṃyúr vípro nadíyo johavīti//

3.33.5. rámadhvam me vácase somiyā́ya ṛ́tāvarīr úpa muhūrtám évaiḥ/
prá síndhum áchā bṛhatī́ manīṣā́ avasyúr ahve kuśikásya sūnúḥ//

Here, Sāyaṇa and *Yāska* (2.25) both agree that the object of Viśvāmitra's crossing is to gather the Soma plant, hence 5a, *somiyāya.*

3.33.6. índro asmā́m̐ aradad vájrabāhur ápāhan vṛtrám paridhíṃ nadī́nām/
devó anayat savitā́ supāṇís tásya vayám prasavé yāma urvī́ḥ//

Indra here breaks up the blocker of rains, thus causing the rivers to swell even more. Savitṛ here is considered by both *Yāska* (2.26) and Sāyaṇa to be an epithet of Indra *(savitā sarvasya jagataḥ prerakaḥ).* Since they are treated separately in the *Ṛg Veda*, I have translated them separately.

3.33.7. pravā́ciyaṃ śaśvadhā́ vīríyaṃ tád índrasya kárma yád áhiṃ vivṛścát/
ví vájrena pariṣádo jaghāna ā́yann ā́po áyanam ichámānāḥ//

3.33.8. etád váco jaritar mā́pi mṛṣṭhā ā́ yát te ghóṣān úttarā yugā́ni/
ukthéṣu kāro práti no juṣasva mā́ no ní kaḥ puruṣatrā námas te//

Here, the extra "te" is considered to be an honorific, said out of respect for the seer.

3.33.9. ó ṣú svasāraḥ kāráve śṛṇota yayaú vo dūrā́d ánasā ráthena/
ní ṣū namadhvam bhávatā supārā́ adhoakṣā́ḥ sindhavaḥ srotiyā́bhiḥ//

3.33.10. ā́ te kāro śṛṇavāmā vácāṃsi yayā́tha dūrā́d ánasā ráthena/
ní te naṃsai pīpiyānéva yóṣā máryāyeva kaníyā śaśvacaí te//

Both Sāyaṇa and *Yāska* take these to be separate vehicles, a *ratha*, or chariot, and an *anas,* or wagon, which would be used to transport Soma.

3.33.11. yád aṅgá tvā bharatā́ḥ saṃtáreyur gavyán grā́ma iṣitá índrajūtaḥ/
árṣād áha prasaváḥ sárgatakta ā́ vo vṛṇe sumatíṃ yajñíyānām//

Sāyaṇa sees the Bharatas here as the same family lineage as Viśvāmitra *(bharataku-*

laja), but this is a difficult issue as their family priest was Vasiṣṭha. Here, also, the long "a" indicating a patronymic is absent.

3.33.12. átāriṣur bharatā́ gavyávaḥ sám ábhakta vípraḥ sumatíṃ nadī́nām/
prá pinvadhvam iṣáyantīḥ surā́dhā ā́ vakṣáṇāḥ pṛṇádhvaṃ yātá śī́bham//

3.33.13. úd va ūrmíḥ śámyā hantu ā́po yóktrāṇi muñcata/
mā́duṣkṛtau víenasā aghniyaú śū́nam ā́ratām//

16. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 2.4–9a

viśvāmitrasya saṃvādam nady atikramaṇe japet/
āplutyācamya vidhivad udakasyā jaliṃ kṣipet//

namaḥ sravadbhya iti yet adyo nityaṃ hi samācaret/
taṃ nadyaḥ srotasaḥ pānti svaṃ putram iva mātaraḥ/

bhayaṃ cāsya na vidyeta nadītīracareṣvapi/
jalacarebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ ṣītoṣṇair na ca bādhyate//

pūṙṇāṃ titīṛṣuḥ saritaṃ ramadhvam iti saṃsmaret/
ā ṣv ity ṛcam apāṃ madhye japed yo vai nadīṃ taran//

sa śīghraṃ tīram āpnoti gādhaṃ vā vindate dvijaḥ/
yuktenaiva rathenāśu yo 'pāṃ pāraṃ titīrṣati//

ud va ūrmir itīmāṃ tu japeta niyataḥ svayam

17. *Ṛg Veda* 10.57

10.57.1. mā́ prá gāma pathó vayám mā́ yajñā́d indra somínaḥ/
mā́ntá sthur no ā́rātayaḥ//

Sominaḥ could here either mean King Asāmati, or plural, the offers of Soma.

10.57.2. yó yajñásya prasā́dhanas tántur devéṣu ā́tataḥ/
tám ā́hutaṃ naśīmahi//

10.57.3. máno nú ā́ huvāmahe nārāśaṃséna sómena/
pitṝ́ṇā́ṃ ca mánmabhiḥ//

Nārāśaṃsena means "the fathers," according to Sāyaṇa; but in *Yajur Veda* 3.53 it reads *stomena,* and thus could mean praise of men, as distinct from gods. *Yajur Veda* 3.53–55 deals with similar material.

10.57.4. ā́ ta etu mánaḥ púnaḥ krátve dákṣāya jīváse/
jiyók ca sū́riyaṃ dṛśé//

10.57.5. púnar naḥ pitaro máno dádātu daíviyo jánaḥ/
jīváṃ vrā́taṃ sacemahi//

10.57.6. vayáṃ soma vraté táva mánas tanū́ṣu bíbhrataḥ/
prajā́vantaḥ sacemahi//

18. *Ṛg Veda* 10.185

10.185.1. máhi trīṇā́m ávo astu dyukṣám mitrásya aryamṇáḥ/
durādhárṣaṃ váruṇasya//

10.185.2. nahí téṣām amā́ caná ná ádhvasu vāraṇéṣu/
ī́śe ripúr aghásaṃsaḥ//

10.185.3. yásmai putrā́so áditeḥ prá jīváse mártiyāya/
jyótir yáchanti ájasram//

See also *Yajur Veda* 3.31–33.

CHAPTER 8. A SHORT HISTORY OF HEAVEN

1. Note *Ṛg Veda* 9.113.7–11, 10.16.1 and 4, 10.14.8; *Atharva Veda* 18.1.55, 18.2.8, 18.3.1 and 73, 8.4.1; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 40.3, 19.45; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.12; *Chandogya Upaniṣad* 5.10; and *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 1.2.

2. āhavanīyaścetpūrvaṃ prāpnuyāt svargaloka enaṃ prāpaditi/
vidyād rātsyatyasāvaṃutraivam ayam asminn iti putraḥ//
And so on, for each of the fires.

3. One should offer *piṇḍa*s with "*Svadhā* to the fathers in earth; *svadhā* to the grandfathers in the middle sphere; and *svadhā* to those great grandfathers in heaven." (See also *HGS* 2.2.4; *GGS* 4.3.10.)

4. Gonda, *Loka.*

5. Ibid., 33.

6. In this same passage they are further homologized with the ritual of mantra recital *(uktham),* the hymn of the *mahāvrata* ceremony and the great fireplace; see Gonda, *Loka,* 136.

7. For one among innumerable examples, we might point to *Mahābhārata* 13.102.48–74ff, where those who perform the right sacrifices of *caturmāsya* and *agnihotra* will be admitted to Varuṇa's *loka,* where as the *Sūrya loka* is for those who are firm in truth.

8. See also *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.15–16; and *Bhagavad Gītā* 8:24–27.

9. Also see *Gītā* 8.6.

10. *Ṛg Veda* 1.154.1–3

1.154.1. víṣṇor nú kaṃ vīríyāṇi prá vocaṃ yáḥ pā́rthivāni vimamé rájāṃsi/
yó áskabhāyad úttaraṃ sadhásthaṃ vicakramāṇás trayidhórugāyáḥ//

Sāyaṇa says that *pṛthvī* here is used as the three worlds, not simply the earth. *Pārthivāni rajāṃsi* may mean the seven lower *loka*s, but this is a later interpretation. In addition, for him *uttaraṃ sadhasthaṃ* could mean the middle sphere, or the seven regions above the earth, or the highest region from which there is no return, or the abode of truth.

1.154.2. prá tád víṣṇu stavate vīríyeṇa mṛgó ná bhīmáḥ kucaró giriṣṭhā́ḥ/
yásyorúṣu triṣú vikrámaṇeṣu adhikṣiyánti bhúvanāni víśvā//

Sāyaṇa explains here that Viṣṇu traverses in his own ways his own created worlds.

1.154.3. prá víṣṇave śūṣám etu mánma girikṣíta urugāyā́ya vṛ́ṣṇe/
yá idáṃ dīrghám práyataṃ sadhástham éko vimamé tribhír ít padébhiḥ/

11. lokatrayas rayabhūtam antarikṣam.

12. In this the *acchāvāka* is no different than the other deputy priests to the *hotṛ,* such as that of the *maitravaruṇa.*

13. This ritual is mentioned in *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra* 10.30.1–31, 31.6–7; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 3.4.1.1.

14. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 1.136–37

indrāviṣṇū namaskṛtya viṣṇor nu kam iti tribhiḥ/
samitpāṇiḥ śucir bhūtvā upatiṣṭhed dine dine//
dharmaṃ buddhiṃ dhanaṃ putrānārogyaṃ brahmavardhanam/
prāpnoti ca paraṃ sthānaṃ jyotīrūpaṃ sanātanam//

15. gunavad yad yad uttaram.

16. Among many compelling examples in the *Yogavasiṣṭha,* the *Story of Bhṛgu* and *Śukra* comes to mind, discussed in Doniger, *Dreams, Illusions,* 90–91, 280, 308; also discussed by Berger and Patton, "Time Travel as a Means of Philosophical Commentary."

17. Patton, "Dis-Solving a Debate."

18. *Ṛg Veda* 9.112

9.112.1. nānānáṃ vā́ u no dhíyo ví vratā́ni jánānām/
tákṣā riṣṭáṃ rutám bhiṣág brahmā́ sunvántam ichati índrāyendo pári srava//

9.112.2. járatībhir óṣadhībhiḥ parṇébhiḥ śakunā́nām/
kārmāró áśmabhir dyúbhir híraṇyavantam ichati índrāyendo pári srava//

9.112.3. kārúr aháṃ tató bhiṣág upalaprakṣíṇī nanā́/
nā́nādhiyo vasūyávo ánu gā́ iva tasthima índrāyendo pári srava//

Sāyaṇa here sees *karuḥ* as poet; *tataḥ* and *nanā* as father and mother or son or daughter. Geldner also follows this meaning.

9.112.4. áśvo vóḻhā sukháṃ ráthaṃ hasanā́m upamantríṇaḥ/
śépo rómaṇvantau bhedaú vā́r ín maṇḍū́ka ichati índrāyendo pári srava//

Sāyaṇa sees *upamantríṇaḥ* as *narmasachivāḥ,* "companions in vow."

19. *Ṛg Veda* 9.113

9.113.1. śaryaṇā́vati sómam índraḥ pibatu vṛtrahā́/
bálaṃ dádhāna ātmáni kariṣyán vīríyam mahád índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.2. ā́ pavasva diśām pata ārjīkā́t soma mīḍhuvaḥ/
ṛtavākéna satyéna śraddháyā tápasā sutá índrāyendo pári srava//

Ārjīkāt is the name of a lake.

9.113.3. parjányavṛddham mahiṣáṃ táṃ sū́ryasya duhitā́bharat/
táṃ gandharvā́ḥ práty agṛbhṇan táṃ sóme rásam ā́dadhur índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.4. ṛtáṃ vádann ṛtadyumna satyáṃ vádan satyakarman/
śraddhā́ṃ vádan soma rājan dhātrā́ soma páriṣkṛta índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.5. satyámugrasya bṛhatáḥ sáṃ sravanti saṃsravā́ḥ/
sáṃ yanti rasíno rásāḥ punānó bráhmaṇā hara índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.6. yátra brahmā́ pavamāna chandasíyāṃ vā́caṃ vádan/
grā́vṇā sóme mahīyáte sómenānandáṃ janáyann índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.7. yátra jyótir ájasraṃ yásmiṁ loké súvar hitám/
tásmin mā́ṃ dhehi pavamāna amṛ́te loké ákṣita índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.8. yátra rā́jā vaivasvató yátrāvaródhanaṃ diváḥ/
yátrāmū́r yahvátīr ā́pas tátra mā́m amŕ̥taṃ kr̥dhi índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.9. yátrānukāmáṃ cáraṇaṃ trināké tridivé diváḥ/
lokā́ yátra jyótiṣmantas tátra mā́m amŕ̥taṃ kr̥dhi índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.10. yátra kā́mā nikāmā́ś ca yátra bradhnásya viṣṭápam/
svadhā́ ca yátra tŕ̥ptiś ca tátra mā́m amŕ̥taṃ kr̥dhi índrāyendo pári srava//

9.113.11. yátrānandā́ś ca módāś ca múdaḥ pramúda ā́sate/
kā́masya yátrāptā́ḥ kā́mās tátra mā́m amŕ̥taṃ kr̥dhi índrāyendo pári srava//

20. *R̥g Veda* 9.114

9.114.1. yá índoḥ pávamānasya ánu dhā́māni ákramīt/
tám āhuḥ suprajā́ íti yás te somā́vidhan mána índrāyendo pári srava//

9.114.2. ŕ̥ṣe mantrakŕ̥tāṃ stómaiḥ káśyapodvardháyan gíraḥ/
sómaṃ namasya rā́jānaṃ yó jajñé vīrúdhām pátir índrāyendo pári srava//

9.114.3. saptá díśo nā́nāsūryāḥ saptá hótāra r̥tvíjaḥ/
devā́ ādityā́ yé saptá tébhiḥ somābhí rakṣa na índrāyendo pári srava//

9.114.4. yát te rājañ chr̥táṃ havís téna somābhí rakṣa naḥ/
arātīvā́ mā́ nas tārīn mó ca naḥ kíṃ canā́mamad índrāyendo pári srava//

21. *R̥g Veda* 10.82

10.82.1. cákṣuṣaḥ pitā́ mánasā hí dhī́ro ghr̥tám ene ajanan nánnamāne/
yadéd ántā ádadr̥hanta pū́rva ā́d íd dyā́vāpr̥thivī́ aprathetām//

The whole hymn occurs in *Yajur Veda* 17.25–31. Sāyaṇa says *manasā dhīraḥ*, "reflecting no one equal to himself."

10.82.2. viśvákarmā vímanā ā́d víhāyā dhātā́ vidhātā́ paramótá saṃdŕ̥k/
téṣām iṣṭā́ni sám iṣā́ madanti yátrā saptarṣī́n pará ékam āhúḥ//

Yāska, in *Nirukta* 10.26, says that the referent in this verse is both to Aditya, the sun, and Paramātma. Sāyaṇa also follows this.

10.82.3. yó naḥ pitā́ janitā́ yó vidhātā́ dhā́māni véda bhúvanāni víśvā/
yó devā́nāṃ nāmadhā́ éka evá táṃ sampraśnám bhúvanā yanti anyā́//

10.82.4. tá ā́yajanta dráviṇaṃ sám asmā ŕ̥ṣayaḥ pū́rve jaritā́ro ná bhūnā́/
asū́rte sū́rte rájasi niṣatté yé bhūtā́ni samákr̥ṇvann imā́ni//

10.82.5. paró divā́ pará enā́ pr̥thivyā́ paró devébhir ásurair yád ásti/
káṃ svid gárbham prathamáṃ dadhra ā́po yátra devā́ḥ samápaśyanta víśve//

10.82.6. tám íd gárbham prathamáṃ dadhra ā́po yátra devā́ḥ samágachanta víśve/
ajásya nā́bhāv ádhi ékam árpitaṃ yásmin víśvāni bhúvanāni tasthúḥ//

"Embryo" in this verse is to be understood as Viśvákarman.

10.82.7. ná táṃ vidātha yá imā́ jajā́na anyád yuṣmā́kam ántaram babhūva/
nīhāréṇa prā́vr̥tā jálpiyā ca asutŕ̥pa ukthaśā́saś caranti//

Sāyaṇa says here, initriguingly, that we cannot know Viśvákarman in the same way as we know earthly men, such as Devadatta, and so on. Viśvákarman as the highest entity does not have individual consciousness. Sāyaṇa also sees this verse

as saying that people who are focused on enjoyment, either in this world or the next, do not know Viśvákarman. It is therefore ironic that the hymn's earlier *viniyoga* is to attain another world!

22. *Ṛg Vidhāna* 3.75

> na taṃ vidāthety etām tu japan vipraḥ samāhitaḥ/
> vihāya kalmaṣaṃ sarvaṃ brahmābhyeti sanātanam//

23. Following O'Flaherty, *Rig Veda, Ṛg Veda* 10.129. Sāyaṇa's comments throughout this hymn tend to refer to the Purāṇas, and Advaitan cosmology of *māyā* and *prakṛti.*

> 10.129.1. nā́sad āsīn nó sád āsīt tadā́nīṃ nā́sīd rájo nó víomā paró yát/
> kím ā́varīvaḥ kúha kásya śármann ámbhaḥ kím āsīd gáhanaṃ gabhīrám//

> 10.129.2. ná mṛtyúr āsīd amṛ́taṃ ná tárhi ná rā́triyā áhna āsīt praketáḥ/
> ā́nīd avātáṃ svadháyā tád ékaṃ tásmād dhānyán ná paráḥ kíṃ canā́sa//

Svadhā here is either *māyā* or *prakṛti,* according to Sāyaṇa — an intriguing but anachronistic perspective.

> 10.129.3. táma āsīt támasā gūḻhám ágre apraketáṃ salilám sárvam ā idám/
> tuchyénābhú ápihitaṃ yád ā́sīt tápasas tán mahinā́jāyataíkam//

> 10.129.4. kā́mas tád ágre sám avartatā́dhi mánaso rétaḥ prathamáṃ yád ā́sīt/
> sató bándhum ásati nír avindan hṛdí pratī́ṣyā kaváyo manīṣā́//

"Desire" here in the mind of the Supreme Being, according to the commentary.

> 10.129.5. tiraścī́no vítato raśmír eṣām adháḥ svid āsī́d upári svid āsīt/
> retodhā́ āsan mahimā́na āsan svadhā́ avástāt práyatiḥ parástāt//

According to Sāyaṇa, because creation was so quick, like a "ray" *(raśmiḥ)* it was impossible to know the order of creation. Using a very old image, he argues that among the created things, some were enjoyers *(bhoktāraḥ)* and others things to be enjoyed *(bhojyāḥ).*

> 10.129.6. kó addhā́ veda ká ihá prá vocat kúta ā́jātā kúta iyáṃ vísṛṣṭiḥ/
> arvā́g devā́ asyá visárjanena áthā kó veda yáta ābabhū́va//

> 10.129.7. iyáṃ vísṛṣṭir yáta ābabhū́va yádi vā dadhé yádi vā ná/
> yó asyā́dhyakṣaḥ paramé víoman só aṅgá veda yádi vā ná véda//

24. nāsad āsīd iti japej juhuyād yoga tat paraḥ/
prajāpates tu sāyojyaṃ dvādaśābdaiḥ samaśnute//

25. Zaleski, *Life of the World to Come;* Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys.*

CONCLUSIONS

1. Although it is clear that this performance is from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, another interpretation was explained to me: this rite could also use *Ṛg Veda* 10.16.6 for protection: "Should the black crow, the ant, the snake, or the wild beast harm you, may Agni devouring All, and the Soma pervading the Brahmins, make it whole." According to *Āśvalāyna Śrauta Sūtra* 10.7.7, on the fifth day of a *sattra,* the sacrificer gathers about him those with the nature of a serpent or

who know about them, and he says, *arbudaḥ kādrevayas tasya sarpā viśaḥ,* and then recites texts connected with the science of poison. I have heard other interpretations of this rite, including that it is a healing rite using plants, and other mantras.

2. This whole hymn also occurs in *Yajur Veda* 3.6–8; and in *Yajur Veda* 2.6.1.11. Sāyaṇa interprets the word *gau* as *gamaṇaśila,* "moving."

3. See Clooney, *Scholasticism.*

4. Gothóni, "Religio and Superstitio Reconsidered."

5. Marin, *Pouvoirs de L'image,* 14–15.

6. Heesterman, "Vedic Sacrifice and Transcendence," 94.

7. Olivelle, *Āśrama System,* 4.

8. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity,* 153.

9. See, among many examples, *Vaikhānasasmārta Sūtra* 4.10–12 for the worship of Viṣṇu in this manner; 3.22b on the mention of a visit to a temple.

10. Bell, *Ritual Change,* 248.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 225.

13. Verdier, "Children Consumed and Child Cannibals," in Patton and Doniger, *Myth and Method,* 27–51.

14. "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge dans la Tradition Orale," *Le Debat.*

15. Ibid., 45.

16. Ibid., 46.

17. Yelle, "Rhetorics of Law and Ritual," 644.

18. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic,* 226.

Glossary

Abhicāra — Lit., "to proceed against." A sacrifice involving offerings and imprecations against an enemy, either human or divine. This rite may involve the tying of the noose of an immolated animal to wood or grass.

Abhiplava ṣaḍaha — One type of Soma ceremony, usually lasting six days. The *abhiplava* is performed in the *sattra,* a lengthened sacrificial session that can last from twelve days to one hundred days to one year. The *abhiplava* consists of an *agniṣṭoma,* the simplest Soma sacrifice, four *ukthya*s or sacrifices involving recitation, and another *agniṣṭoma.*

Acchāvāka priest — The "inviter" priest who works underneath the *hotṛ,* or head invoker, priests. He recites *Ṛg Veda* 5.25.1–3, which begins with :*"acchā,"* hence his name. He receives the last of the shares of the offering after the other priests.

Adhvaryu — One of four main priests of the sacrifice, attached to the *Yajur Veda,* the Veda of ritual procedures.

Aditi — A goddess in the Vedic pantheon, who gives birth to the Ādityas, or sons of Aditi. She consumes the leftovers of a rice offering and gives birth to seven children, then the eighth is a miscarriage or an abortion. That lost child is called Vivasvat Āditya, a star deity.

Agastya — A great sage mentioned in the Vedas and subject of many legends in later Vedic, Epic, and Purāṇic literature. He reconciles the god Indra and the storm gods, the Maruts, who are in competition for the goods of the sacrifice.

Agni — The god of fire, as well as fire itself. *Agni* is one of the main gods of the Vedic pantheon and is associated with the priests, or the brahmin class.

Agnicayana — Lit., the heaping of the fire altar. This fire altar is used in the Soma sacrifices and consists of five layers of specially prepared and numbered bricks. The altar can be in several shapes and the bricks also can be triangular,

oblong, or square. The building of the altar is accompanied by mantras and is said to be a human version of the creation of the world by Prajāpati.

Āgnīdhrīya fire — A circular hearth where the *agnihotṛ* priest is situated. He is the "lighter of the fire" and lights up and maintains the *dhiṣṇya*s, or eight small seats supporting the fire for the Soma priests.

Agnihotra — The basic rite of setting up of the sacrificial fires, offering cows' milk into the fire. It is performed in the early morning and in the evening.

Āgnimārutaśastra — A sacrificial recitation addressed to Agni and the Maruts, the gods of the storm, and the last recitation in the *agniṣṭoma.*

Agniṣṭoma — Lit., "praise of *Agni.*" The *agniṣṭoma* is a model of the *Soma* sacrifice. Its "core" only lasts one day, but with the various patterns of chanting, constructing altars, animal and vegetable offerings, and distribution of sacrificial fees, the ceremony lasts five days.

Agnyādhāna (also *agnyādheya*) — Lit., setting up fires. A two-day *iṣṭi* sacrifice needing four priests, in which the sacrificial fires are established.

Āgrayaṇa — Lit., the "eating" of the first fruits. An *iṣṭi* sacrifice performed on either the new- or full-moon day. The *āhitāgni* (keeper of domestic fires) performs it so that his harvest might be abundant.

Āhavanīya — One of the three main fires in the sacrifice, a square mound on the eastern side of the sacrificial shed. One can cook and perform *homa* on this fire.

Ahi — A snake, or serpent, usually thought of as the demon Vṛtra.

Ahīna — Lit., "several days." A Soma ritual whose length is two to twelve days and ends with an *atirātra,* an overnight sacrifice.

Āhitāgni — One who has set up the fires and performed the rite of *agnyādhāna.* He is a householder sacrificer who is burnt in his fires upon death.

Āhuti — From root *hu,* to sacrifice. The act of pouring one ladle filled with ghee into the fire.

Ajira — A quick, rapid sacrifice, compressed for a particular purpose.

Ājya — Melted butter. The basic offering, usually melted on the *gārhapatya* and poured into a pot with two *pavitra*s moving backward and forward on it.

Ājyabhāga — Two libations of butter that come before the main offering in the *darśapūrṇamāsa,* the main model for the *iṣṭi* type of sacrifice.

Amartyaloka — The realm of those who do not die, the world or space of the immortal.

Aṃhas — Lit., constricted, narrow, a state caused by being bound or fettered. The demon Vṛtra creates *aṃhas* by blocking the rivers. *Uru,* wide, or *arivovittara* — "space, openness, freedom" — is its opposite.

Annam — Nourishment, food. *Annam* can also be an oblation of ghee, pounded barley, and rice.

Antarikṣaloka — The specific "realm" or "world" that is the space between heaven and earth; the middle sphere of the Vedic cosmos.

Anubandhya — A sacrifice usually involving a sterile cow, offered at the end of the Soma sacrifice and following the *"paśu"* model.

Anumatī — Lit., "permission, approval." Also personified as a goddess and a name for an oblation to this goddess. (On the fifteenth day of the moon's cycle, the gods receive oblations with approval.)

Anupravacanīya — A ritual involving the initiation of the study of the Veda with a guru. It is preceded by many recitations, including the *sāvitrī* and the *mahānāmnī*s.

Anuvākyā — Lit., "the saying after." An invitational call to a deity, which is uttered by the *hotṛ*. It is distinguished by its monotone and the elongation of the final *om.*

Apām Napāt — Lit., "Grandson of the waters." The form of Agni that is taken in the waters, especially as he hides from other gods.

Ārjīkas — A people who sponsored the pressing of Soma juice and who inhabited a region where Soma grew on the banks of rivers and lakes. The lake also housed the head of the sage Dadhyañc.

Artha — Lit., "end," "goal," or "meaning." In the Vedic world *artha* has all three connotations, as the result around which the sacrifice is organized.

Ārya — Lit., "nobility." The adjective used to describe the composers of the Vedic hymns as well-spoken and highly cultured.

Āśīs — Wish or strong desire. Many Vedic hymns are designated as an *āśīs* for a particular result.

Āśrama — The abode of an ascetic of a sage. Also the name for the four "stages" in the life of a brahmin — student, householder, forest dweller, and renunciant.

Asuras — The traditional enemies of the gods who compete for the goods of sacrifice; they practice the use of *māyā,* or artifice and illusion.

Āśvalāyana — A school of Vedic interpretation, based on the *Ṛg Veda,* possibly from the Kuru Pañcāla region.

Aśvamedha — The horse sacrifice, following the *"paśu"* model of Soma sacrifice. Its preparations can take more than one year, and it is traditionally performed by a king who has been crowned but has not yet begun rulership. The horse is let off to wander for a year, under heavy guard, and the territory covered by the horse can be claimed by the king.

Āśvinaśastra — Primarily a recitation in honor of the Aśvins, recited in the Soma sacrifices and consisting of more than one thousand verses.

Aśvins — The twin gods of health and healing, also associated with fertility and agriculture.

Ātithyeṣṭhi — A ritual welcoming a guest, which involves a regular *iṣṭi* offering followed by the offering of a cake to Viṣṇu.

Āyu — To pull or draw oneself, take possession of.

Bandhu — An unseen but powerful connection between two entities. In the Vedic world, it could be between a mantra and the outside ritual world surrounding it.

Bāṣkala recension — A version of the *Ṛg Veda* transmitted by the pupils of Bāṣkala, a famous teacher, possibly associated with the Kauṣikas.

Brahmaloka — The realm or world inhabited by the god Brahmā. This is to be distinguished from the monistic principle of *brahman.*

Brahman — Lit., "sacred knowledge," or "power behind the sacrifice." *Brahman* later came to mean all other things in the universe, the "Self" of all beings.

Brāhmaṇa — The most learned of the four principal priests who knows the first three Vedas. He is usually a silent presider over the proceedings of the sacrifice, but he gives instructions when asked.

Brāhmaṇācchaṁsin — A priest who assists the *brahmaṇa* as well as the *hotṛ* and who "recites after" them.

*Brāhmaṇa*s — Ritual philosophical compendia that postdate the Vedas. They explain rules as well as narrate origins for ritual procedure, and each is attached to a Veda.

Bṛhaspati — The god of speech in Vedic mythology. He is the male counterpart to Vāc, the goddess of speech.

Caitraratha — A sacrifice related to the *gandharva citra-ratha* and the name of a *dvyaha* ceremony. Caitraratha was also the name of a family entitled to a special kind of sacrifice, and whose king held a higher position in his clan.

Caturvīra — A Soma sacrifice lasting four days.

Chandas — Vedic meter, or the science of Vedic meter. It can also connote a single sacred hymn, or the text of a sacred hymn.

Dakṣina — A payment for sacrifice, usually in the form of livestock and other material gifts. This is usually conducted in a solemn ceremony.

Dakṣināgni or *Dakṣina* — The southern fire of the three sacred fires. It is near the *gārhapatya,* to the southeast, and semicircular in shape.

Darśapūrṇamāsa — Lit., "seen as full." An *iṣṭi* offering, involving the four principal priests and conducted on the new- and full-moon days. It is a model for all the other *iṣṭis.*

Devas — Gods, or "powers." The principal gods are Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Aśvins, Sūrya, and Soma.

Devatā — An "object-deity." The object of honor and worship for an individual Vedic hymn or ritual.

Dharaṇā (-ṇi, -ṇam) — Lit., bearing, or holding. Also a name for the earth as "supporter" of creatures.

Dhī — The root for "sacred sight." A capacity of the Vedic poets for insight and vision, usually in the form of the sacred hymns of the Vedas.

Dīkṣā — The consecration of the sacrificer at the beginning of the Soma sacrifice. It is performed after the first *iṣṭi,* or offering of vegetable, and *āhuti,* or offering of butter into the fire.

Dvādaśāha — A Soma sacrifice lasting twelve days.

Ekadhanā — Running water used for the Soma pressing and mixed with Soma juice. This water is also stored in earthen jugs.

Gārhapatya — Lit., belonging to the *gṛhapati,* or lord of the house. The domestic fire of the three sacred fires and the "source fire" for the other two.

Gāyatrī mantra — The mantra of *Ṛg Veda* 3.62.10. A mantra used by brahmins at sunrise to greet the sun and at sunset. It is addressed to *Sāvitrī,* the impeller, and is thus also called the *Sāvitrī. Gāyatrī* is also the name of a Vedic meter.

Gharma — A mixture of hot milk and butter, usually of a cow or female goat. It is used in the offering to the Aśvins or Vāyu. It can also be a name for the *pravargya* rite.

Gṛhya Sūtras — Domestic ritual manuals, outlining the appropriate life-cycle rites of a brahmin and his family, including conception, birth, initiation into Vedic study, marriage, and death.

Hautra — Relating to the office and function of the *hotṛ.*

Havirdhāna — The two carts placed in the center of the sacrificial arena. The Soma plant (called a *havis*) is stored here the day before it is pressed.

Havis — Anything that is poured into the sacrificial fire as an oblation. These could include both vegetable and animal substances.

Hotṛ — Lit., the "pourer of the oblation." One of the four main priests of the sacrifice whose responsibility is to recite the stanzas of the *Ṛg Veda*.

Hotraka — Assistant of the *hotṛ* priests. The assistants correspond to the priestly owners of the Soma cups, called *camasins*.

Iḍā — The cut-up portions of all the oblations. In a sacrifice, *iḍā* is mixed with ghee and eaten by all the priests and their assistants together.

Indra — The Vedic warrior god, depicted as a personality of great vigor and heroic deeds, such as slaying the demon Vṛtra and freeing the cows from their captors.

Indrajāla — Lit., the net of Indra. Illusion, artifice. Also a weapon used by the warrior hero Arjuna in the *Mahābhārata*.

Iṣṭi — An oblation of *havis,* which is poured by the *adhvaryu* as he stands to the south of the altar and utters a particular mantra. This offering is vegetable, not involving Soma or animal offerings, and involves all four priests.

Japa — A mantra recited in a low tone, or the act of recitation in this style. *Japa* is frequently translated as "muttering," which has sinister connotations that are not intended by the use of this term.

Jarūtha — Lit., "making old." Name of a demon conquered by Agni.

Jātavedas — Lit., "knowing of beings." A name of Agni, particularly as he takes on different forms in the three worlds. Agni Jātavedas is also interpreted as "known by all beings."

Juhū — Lit., "tongue" or "flame." A curved wooden ladle used to pour ghee into the fire.

Kāmya — Ceremonies undertaken for a particular wish or desire, such as the begetting of a son. These are distinguished from *nitya* rites — ones that are obligatory but not originating in desire.

Kapāla — A cup, jar, or dish, used for the *purodāsa* sacrifice. Also known as the alms bowl of a beggar, and the word for a skull or skull bone.

Khara — Lit., "sharp, rough." A square-shaped mound of earth that receives the sacrificial vessels.

Khila — Lit., a piece of rubble of wasted land, or a space that is not filled up. In the Vedic world, a hymn added to an original collection.

Kīrtanam — Lit., "mentioning, reciting, praising." *Kirtanam* is especially conducted in popular sacred texts such as the *Gītā* and the *Purāṇas*.

Krama — Lit., a "step," or "going." It has the larger meaning of "order," right numbering, series, method. It is also the fifth *pramāṇa,* or principle of application in *Mīmāṃsā,* in which one can tell the performance or usage through the order implied in a text.

Krama pāṭha — The step-by-step arrangement of a Vedic text to insure against mistakes.

Kṛtyā — Lit., "to be done." The practice of sorcery or action against someone, secretly influencing events and people, frequently with the use of a small image.

Laukika — Lit., "of the world." A term designating actions and desires that are of this world, as distinct from those of heaven.

Liṅga — Lit., a "mark," or "sign." A typical characteristic, such as those of a god or of a ritual, more strongly an essential property of a thing. It also means indirect expression or secondary meaning, which is the second *pramāṇa* or principle of application in *Mīmāṃsā.*

Loka — A "world" or "realm." It is important to note the strong connotation of this word as a space in which a thing or an action can thrive, not necessarily a geographical site per se.

Mahāvedi — Lit., "the large altar." A trapezoidal area marked out by the *adhvaryu* with ropes and pegs for the performance of Soma sacrifice.

Mahāvīra — An earthen pot or cup designed to hold milk offerings used in the *pravargya* rite. It is usually held with a pair of tongs and polished with the new clothes of a bride.

Mahāvrata — Lit., "the greatest vow" or practice. It is held on the second to last day of a *sattra,* or long sacrificial session. The ceremony has several elements of verbal contest, archery contest, intercaste rivalry, and sexual play, as well as dance and drama. It is focused on the winter equinox.

Maitravaruṇa — The priest belonging to Mitra and Varuṇa, the first assistant of the *hotṛ.* He recites at the morning pressing and gives instructions to other priest called *praiṣa*s.

Maṇḍala — Lit., "circle." It is also the name of the ten major divisions, or groupings, of the *Ṛg Veda.*

Mantra — A sacred poetic formula, usually a verse from one of the four Vedas.

Manuṣyaloka — The world of humans, the mortal realm.

Maruts — The gods associated with Indra, they are young, clad in warrior-like garb, and travel in groups.

Marutvatīya — A drawing of *Soma* at the midday pressing, dedicated to "Indra as the owner of the Maruts *[Indramarutvat].*"

Mātariśvan — A sacrificer mentioned in a *khila* hymn of the *Ṛg Veda* (8.52.2).

Māyā — Artifice, or power over created matter, frequently connoting illusion or trompe d'oeuil.

Medhā — Intelligence, agile mental ability, also deified as a goddess.

Mīmāṃsā — Lit., the longing to think (derivative of root *man*), profound reflection. A school of philosophy concerned with the appropriate interpretation of Vedic ritual. It divides the Vedic corpus into *codana,* or injunctive statements, and mantra, statements meant to support those central injunctions.

Mitra — The deity of alliance and "friendly" connection, frequently paired with Varuṇa, the god associated with mystery and the sea.

Nāga — Lit., snake. Also a group of peoples associated with snakes mentioned in the Vedas.

Nārāyaṇa — Son of the original man. Also identified as a deity associated with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa.

Niṣkāma — "Disinterested" rites, performed without desire for a particular goal.

Niṣkevalya — Lit., "belonging exclusively." Name of a rite of the midday Soma pressing belonging to Indra alone.

Pada — Lit., "a foot." In Vedic terms, "foot" of a verse or foot-length in a sacrificial procedure. In recitation, a word of a text.

Pada pāṭha — A word-by-word arrangement of a text in Vedic recitation.

Pākayajña — A cooked sacrifice; according to some, a domestic sacrifice of a simple form conducted in the home.

Pāṇis — The group of demons who steal the cows and against whom Indra has to battle to set them free.

Paribhāṣā — Lit., "speech" or "discourse." Any explanatory rule of definition, a maxim that teaches proper interpretation of Vedic hymns.

Parjanya — The Vedic god of rain and deity of many Vedic hymns.

Paśuyajña — The animal sacrifice where cows or goats are offered as the main offering. They are parts of the Soma sacrifice.

Pavitra — Lit., the "purifier." From the root *pu*. Altar for Soma, made up out of white wool; also a filter of two blades of *dharba* grass, used for purifying the waters used in any sacrifice.

Pitu — Nourishment, food, especially in the form of juice.

Potṛ — From root *pu*. One who purifies, an assistant to the *brāhmaṇa* and the *hotṛ*. Also recites at the morning pressing of Soma.

Prācīnavaṃśa — Lit., "the east branches." The bamboo beams of the *śālā,* or sacrificial shed. They are metonymically used to refer to the entire shed.

Prajāpati — Lit., "Lord of creatures." One of the prominent creator deities in the creation narratives of the Brāhmaṇas and a deity in the Upaniṣads who remains powerful but secondary to Brahman.

Prajñā — Wisdom, in the Vedic perspective, the knowledge of the *ṛṣis,* both of mantras and procedures.

Prakaraṇa — Contextual unity of a passage. This is the fourth *pramāṇa,* or principle of application in Mīmāṃsā.

Prakṛti — The natural world, but specifically in Vedic usage, a "model" or "prototype" for other rites. It is to be contrasted with *vikṛti,* which is the variant on the model.

Pramāṇa — Lit., "measure," or standard. A means of acquiring *pramā,* or certain knowledge. There are six according to classical philosophical systems. There are also six linguistic *pramāṇa*s, which comprise the principles for applying mantra to ritual.

Prāṇāgnihotra — Lit., the sacrifice of the breath. In the later Vedic period, one name for meditation involving control of the in-breath and out-breath.

Prasarpaṇa — From *pra* plus root *sṛp,* "to creep." A procession of priests in which each joins to form a line, led by the *adhvaryu,* grasping the garment of the priest ahead of them. It is a procession accompanying the *bahiṣpavamanastotra,* a praise of Soma in the morning pressing which is partly held outside the Vedi.

Prātaranuvāka — A litany recited by the *hotṛ* in the hours before dawn, where the priest sits between the two *havirdhāna* carts and gradually raises his voice in ascending tone.

Pratīka — The first word of a mantra, or verse, usually cited in *sūtra*s, indexes, and other summary works to stand for the whole verse or hymn.

Praügaśastra — The second *śastra* at the morning pressing, recited by the *hotṛ,* containing *Ṛg Veda* 1.2 and 1.3.

Pravargya — Lit., "to twist." A ritual incorporated into the Soma sacrifice, involving the offering of a milk and ghee mixture called *gharma.* This is usually made to Aśvins, Vāyu, Indra, Savitṛ, Bṛhaspati, and Yama — and all the doors of the *śālā* are closed off.

Puroruc nivid — Lit., extra verses "shining in front." Supplementary mantras that are recited at the morning pressing at the beginning of the *śastra* recitation.

Pūru — A man, or a people, also a name for a Vedic tribe.

Puruṣamedha — Lit., the sacrifice of the man. Technically a Soma sacrifice, but it is unclear whether it was ever actually performed in the Vedic period.

Pūṣan — The Vedic pathfinder deity who leads the way and acts as a beacon for lost souls.

Rājasūya — Lit., "pressing out." The sacrifice of kingly coronation, performed by a *kṣatriya.* The *dīkṣā* begins in February or March, followed with a Soma rite and several *iṣṭis* as well as an *abhiṣekam,* or coronation ceremony. It can last for up to two years.

Rakṣasa — Lit., "a protector or guardian," but in common parlance a demon or negative force who competes with both gods and humans.

Ṛṣi — A Vedic sage. Also the author of the Vedic hymns and the being said to be present at the first sacrifice at the creation of the universe.

Rudra — Lit., "Roarer" or "Howler." A fierce Vedic god of storms and father of the Rudras and the Maruts.

Rūpa — Lit., "shape," or "form," but also beauty.

Sadas — Lit., a "gathering," or "assembly." A shed situated within the *mahāvedi.* It is build to the east of the *śālā,* or sacrificial shed, and holds the priests, their *dhiṣṇya*s, and other *prasarpakas.*

Śākala recension — A version of the *Ṛg Veda* handed down through the followers of the Śakala school. Śakala the grammarian is said to be the mythical arranger of the *pada pāṭha* text of the *Ṛg Veda.*

Śākhā — Lit., "branch." A school of Vedic interpretation. Each *śākhā* was attached to a particular Veda and located within a particular region.

Samākhya — Mentioning, telling, something proclaimed to be. *Samākhya* is the sixth principle of application in Mīmāṃsā, in which the name of a mantra indicates its use.

Sāman — A Vedic chant, following a particularly melodic meter. *Sāman* is technically the melody that accompanies the mantra, but it comes to mean the mantra itself. *Sāmans* are compiled in the *Sāma Veda.*

Samāvartana — Lit., "to turn back." From the root *sam-ā-vṛt.* A ritual to ensure the safe return of a student from his teacher's house at the end of a period of Vedic study.

Śambara — A demon slain by Indra, on behalf of Divodāsa Atithigva.

Saṃhitā — Lit., "a collection." The compendia of verses that make up any given Veda — *Ṛk,* the *Yajur,* and the *Sāma Veda.*

Saṃhitā pāṭha — The Vedic recitation that puts together individual words in *sandhi,* or euphonic combination.

Sandhi — In Sanskrit, the combining of both vowels and consonants to create a new sound, presumably easier to pronounce.

Śāṅkhāyana school — A *śākhā* of Vedic interpretation, associated with the *Ṛg Veda* and possibly located in the Kuru Pañcala region.

Sarasvatī — Lit., "possessing *saras,* or ghee." The name of a river in the *Ṛg Veda,* the source of abundance and plenty, and later, a goddess in her own right.

Śaryaṇāvat — Lit., "ready." A pond, or a receptacle for Soma, possibly the name of a mythical lake.

Śastra — A recitation of mantras, as opposed to the *stotra,* which is chanted. Generally, *śastra*s are recited by the hotṛ and *follow* a *stotra.*

Sat/asat — Being and nonbeing. Two common poles of philosophical speculation in the early Vedic period. Both are said to have existed at the creation of the universe.

Śatru — An enemy, overthrower, or foe.

Sattra — A sacrificial session involving a Soma sacrifice that lasts from twelve days to one year.

Śaunaka — Name of the author of several works of Vedic interpretation, most famously the *Bṛhaddevatā* and the *Ṛk Prātiśākhya.* Followers of his line of interpretation are of the Śaunakīya school.

Śauraṇyi — A collection of Ṛg Vedic hymns devoted to the sun and recited at the morning pressing of the Soma sacrifice.

Sāvitrī — Hymn to Savitṛ, the impeller, or the one who pushes the sun across the sky and causes other forms of life-giving motion to occur. Particularly, the name for *Ṛg Veda* 3.62.1, also known as the *Gāyatrī* hymn.

Sāyaṇa — A commentator on the *Ṛg Veda* from the fourteenth-century Vijayanagara empire. His views tend to be Vedāntic in nature.

Sīmantonnayana — A ritual where the hair of the wife is parted upward during the fourth month of her first pregnancy.

Smṛti — Lit., that which is "remembered" or "known." A class of sacred Hindu works that are highly prestigious, but do not have the status of *śruti,* that which is heard or revealed. The Vedic corpus tends to be classified as *śruti,* while the epics and Purāṇas are classified as *smṛti.* These boundaries are extremely fluid.

Soma — The sacred plant that is crushed and pressed during a certain kind of Vedic sacrifice. Soma is said to be purified through this crushing and is the cause of visionary eloquence. The basic model of the Soma sacrifice is the *agniṣṭoma.*

Somapavamāna mantras — These mantras hail from the ninth *maṇḍala* or collection of the *Ṛg Veda.* They are addressed to Soma as both plant and deity and are sung as the plant is being pressed for consumption, or "purified."

Śrauta Sūtras — Sacred ritual texts concerned with the proper procedures for the sacrifice, such as the responsibility of priests, the placement and use of implements, and the application of mantras.

Śrāvaṇa — A sacrifice that takes place on the full moon of the month July–August. Butter cakes, cooked food, and barley are offered to ward off snakes.

Śruti — "That which is heard." The revealed part of the early Indian corpus, usually (but not always) identified with Vedic works. *Śruti* is handed down orally,

from father to son, in a protected educational environment. *Śruti,* direct expression or injunction, is also the first *pramāṇa* or principle of application in *Mīmāṃsā.*

Stoma — From the root *stu,* "to praise." A method of chanting *stotra*s, in which the number of verses is gradually increased. They are therefore known, or designated, by number, such as a *trivṛt,* or threefold *stoma.*

Sukṛtasya loka — Lit., a "well-made world." A realm that the worshiper might well ask to enter.

Sūkta — A Vedic hymn made up of anywhere from three to sixty verses, usually dedicated to a particular deity or group of deities. Mantras as well as entire *sūkta*s are applied in Vedic ritual.

Sūrya — The Vedic sun god. Sūrya is important in Vedic ritual, as many hymns dedicated to him are sung at sunrise when the fires are kindled. It can also simply mean "the sun."

*Sūtra*s — Lit., "threads." Texts composed in aphoristic style, focusing on short maxims. In the case of the Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras, these are ritual maxims. In the case of Mīmāṃsā Sūtras, these are philosophical maxims *about* ritual.

Svādhyāya — Lit., "self-recitation," or "self-study." A form of Vedic recitation and study involving only a single individual. This is advocated during the late Vedic period and mentioned in the Gṛhya and Vidhāna texts. It can take the place of a complex sacrifice.

Svāhā — One of the important Vedic exclamations uttered when pouring ghee into the fire in conducting the basic *homa.*

Svargaloka — The world of heaven, one of the three realms of the Vedic cosmos. *Svarga* is one of the main objects or "*arthas*" of the Vedic sacrifice.

Svastyayana — Lit., "the happy path," or "auspicious going." The time deemed most auspicious for beginning a ritual.

Śyena — Lit., hawk or falcon sacrifice. A speeded up, one-day sacrifice, which produces fast results and can be used as a charm against an enemy.

Tapas — Austere meditation or other focused practice, said to bring on inner heat from the body itself.

Tīrtha — Lit., "a ford," or "crossing." A sacred place of crossing or transition in the Vedic sacrificial arena itself. In Epic and Purāṇic, it comes predominantly to mean a sacred natural crossing, where the gods have come down to earth.

Tvaṣṭṛ — The Vedic deity of crafting, making, and fashioning.

Udgatṛ — The charter of the *sāmans* of the *Sāma Veda,* one of the four principal priests in the sacrifice.

Udumbara — Wood (also *uḍumbara*). A ficus tree with purificatory properties used for sacrificial implements.

Uktha — A recitation, occasionally used synonymously with *śastra,* but actually making up the principal of the four parts of the *śastra.*

Ukthya — A Soma sacrifice in which there are both fifteen *stotras,* or chants, and fifteen *śastra*s, or recitations.

Upakaraṇa — Lit., "helping," "doing a service," also "instrument." The ceremony involving the purification of ritual instruments in the sacrifice.

Upasad — Lit., "homage." An *iṣṭi,* or agricultural offering that is conducted after the *dīkṣā,* or consecration of the sacrificer.

Upayamana — Lit., a "prop," or "stay." The earthen matter (usually sand or clay) that holds and carries fire.
Uṣas — The Vedic goddess of the dawn, who chases away her sister, night, at sunrise.
Utsarga — A ritual that gives one permission to skip over certain parts of a *sattra,* the longer sacrificial session.
Uttaravedi — The upper altar that holds the *āhavanīya* fire. It is used for Soma sacrifices, built on the *mahāvedi.*
Vāc — The Vedic goddess of speech, who inspires brahmins in the sacrifice and creates the world.
Vaiśvānara — Relating or belonging to all men, collectively; also a word for relating or belonging to all the gods. A name of Agni, or Sūrya.
Vājapeya — Lit., "drink of vigor." A Soma sacrifice preceding the *rājasūya,* or coronation, which involves popular rites, such as contest, chariot races, and the ritual consumption of wine.
Vākya — A recitation of a formula used in certain *śrauta* ceremonies. *Vākya* is also the third *pramāṇa,* or principle of application in Mīmāṃsā, syntactic unity or the anticipation of one word by another.
Vālakhilya — Name of a separate collection of hymns to the *Ṛg Veda,* numbered 6, 8, or 11.
Varṇa — Lit., "color." The four classes of society, including *brahmin*s (priests), *kṣatriya*s (warriors), *vaiśya*s (merchants, agriculturalists), and *śūdra*s (servants). These are enumerated as emerging from parts of the body of the cosmic man, in sacrifice.
Vasus — Lit., "wealth." Also a group of deities common in the *Ṛg Veda* associated with prosperity.
Vāta/Vāyu — Vedic god of wind, known by both of these names.
Veda — Lit., "knowledge." The four collections of sacred formulae called mantras, all used in rituals. These are the *Ṛg Veda,* or knowledge of the verses, the *Yajur Veda,* or knowledge of the ritual rules, the *Sāma Veda,* or knowledge of the chants, and the *Atharva Veda,* or knowledge of the domestic formulae.
Vidhāna — Lit., "application," or "rule." A class of literature in the late Vedic period that concerns the use of mantras for the individual brahmin. Many of these concern extrasacrificial situations, such as a journey homeward, getting lost in the woods, the sudden appearance of a dove in one's kitchen, and so on.
Vidhi — Vedic ritual rule, or precept, to be followed at all times, inviolable principle.
Vikṛti — A variant form of a prototype or model ritual, called a *prakṛti.*
Viniyoga — "Application," particularly of a mantra. The placement of a poetic formulae within a ritual situation, according to criteria of association and connection between the words uttered and the ritual action enjoined.
Vipāś — A Vedic river.
Viṣṇu — One of the classical Hindu deities, the preserver who takes on different *avatāras,* or forms, to save the world of its particular afflictions. Viṣṇu also appears in the Vedic literature as the one who takes three strides to conquer the demon, and he is referred to as Purushottama, the great man.

Viśvajit — Lit., "all conquering." A Soma ceremony with a particularly large *dakṣiṇa,* or gift — one hundred horses, one thousand cattle, or one's entire property.

Viśvákarman — "The All-Maker." A Vedic god who is said to be fashioner of all.

Vivāha — Lit., "to carry away." The Vedic marriage ceremony. It is one of the major and most elaborate *saṃskāras* named in the Gṛhya Sūtras. *Ṛg Veda* 10.85, one of the most famous hymns, is recited during the proceedings.

Vrata — Vow, or observance. This could be a ritual obligation or a personal commitment taken out of personal desire.

Vṛṣotsarga — Lit., "release of the bull." A ritual where one of the finest bulls of the herd is chosen and decorated and released into the herd of cows. A ghee oblation is offered, and cooked food is offered to Puṣan, the pathfinder deity. Brahmins drink the cooked milk of the cows.

Vṛtra — The Vedic demon, in the shape of a large dragon or snake, who blocks the channels of rivers and obstructs their natural flow. He is slain by Indra and the world's natural cycles can turn again.

Vyāhṛti — Sacred mantras or formulae, "*bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ*" — frequently pronounced in domestic rituals such as marriage, *upanayana,* or *sīmantonnayana.* These three formulae can also be uttered singly or together.

Yajamāna — The sponsor of the sacrifice, who funds the proceedings and is consecrated *(dīkṣā)* at the beginning of the rituals. His wife, the *yajamānī,* also plays an important symbolic role, usually involving fertility.

Yajña — The Vedic sacrifice, usually in the form of an *iṣṭi,* or agricultural sacrifice, or a Soma sacrifice. A Soma sacrifice may involve a vegetable or animal offering. A *yajña* must contain three elements: *dravya* (substances), *devatā* (deity), and *tyāga* (the act of giving up of the materials).

Yājyā — Lit., "that which is to be sacrificed." The term for a basic mantra that consecrates, recited by the *hotṛ* as the *adhvaryu* offers butter into the fire.

Yama — The Vedic god of death who, in one of many Vedic cosmogonies, rules in an underworld kingdom and receives the departing spirit.

Yathāliṅgam — According to the appropriate characteristics contained in a mantra, or poetic formula. Ritual actions should follow, or be in accord, with what is expressed therein.

Yātudhāna — A kind of evil spirit or demon in the *Ṛg Veda.*

Yūpa pole — A sacrificial pole where the sacrificial animal is tied. The wood varies according to the *artha,* or goal of the ritual.

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